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INDEPENDENT NINTENDO

ISSUE #117
MARCH 2006 / £3.99
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SUBS & DISTRIBUTION
Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST RLSC-SXSE-SKKT, Unit 4, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9EF.
Tel: 0870 837 4722

Distributed by Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 5th Floor, Low Rise Building, Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS
Tel: 0207 633 3333

Overseas distribution by:
Future Publishing Ltd. Tel: 01225 442244

Printed in the UK by TPL Ltd

Printed on chlorine free paper

Non-executive Chairman Roger Parry
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Tel +44 1225 442244 *www.futureplc.com*

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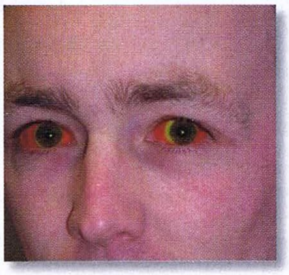
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LOOK INTO MY EYES...



Bet you weren't expecting to see me here, were you? Least of all turned into a spooky *ZOMBIE* by the power of some unseen Photoshop master! Fear me! I am now, to be perfectly honest, the master. And what I say… goes.

So when I told my pal Shigsy that this month's **NGC** Magazine would be revealing Revolution's exact 2008 European launch date, along with exclusive details of its built-in *Mario Party 8* game, I expected instant results.

Instead I got a package containing *Resident Evil DS*, which came as quite a surprise – not least because the game box was attached to a rather powerful spring, causing it to issue forth at great speed, striking me square across the bridge of the nose. Hence the painful eyes. I'm not a zombie at all, see. Bah.

Anyway, sorely tempted (as I was) to dub this malevolent DS delivery a Cack-In-The-Box, it actually turned out to be quite acceptably decent. Not in a *Resi 4* sort of way, obviously, but sufficiently good to make me ignore the nagging worry that I may have fractured my brain.

Before I disappear to locate the nearest bag of frozen peas, I'd like to take this opportunity to direct you to page 45, where you'll find details of how to claim a free mobile game.

Can I go home now?

KITTS

TURN OVER THE PAGE!
Head over to page 6 now for the all the latest Revolution gossip



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Head over to page 65 to see how you can get **NGC** delivered direct to your door, before it hits the news stands.

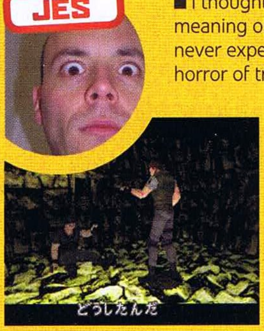
THIS MONTH
WE HAVE MOSTLY BEEN PLAYING...

GERAINT



■ Well, boyo, it has to be *Sega Casino*. Back home in the valleys, I used to smear coal dust on my face and mug old grannies for their bingo winnings. But now that I've learned the rules of poker, I'm a new man. Gambling is big *and* clever!

JES



■ I thought I knew the meaning of fear, but I'd never experienced the sheer horror of trying to solve a visual puzzle, in Japanese, with pixels the size of my head. Still, at least I still have my limbs, and I should be thankful for small mercies.

GREENER



■ Playing? Hah! Weeping, more like. Here I am, the finest gamer this side of Cheltenham, and I get some crapulent virtual pet cash-in to review. As usual, I pretend to dislike it, while using it to lure unwitting females. Ahhh.

NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!

1
PAGE 12



METROID PRIME HUNTERS

BOUNTY BEAUTY!

Samus is back, bounty huntin' through the universe. Plum.

2
PAGE 30



VIEWTIFUL JOE RED HOT RUMBLE

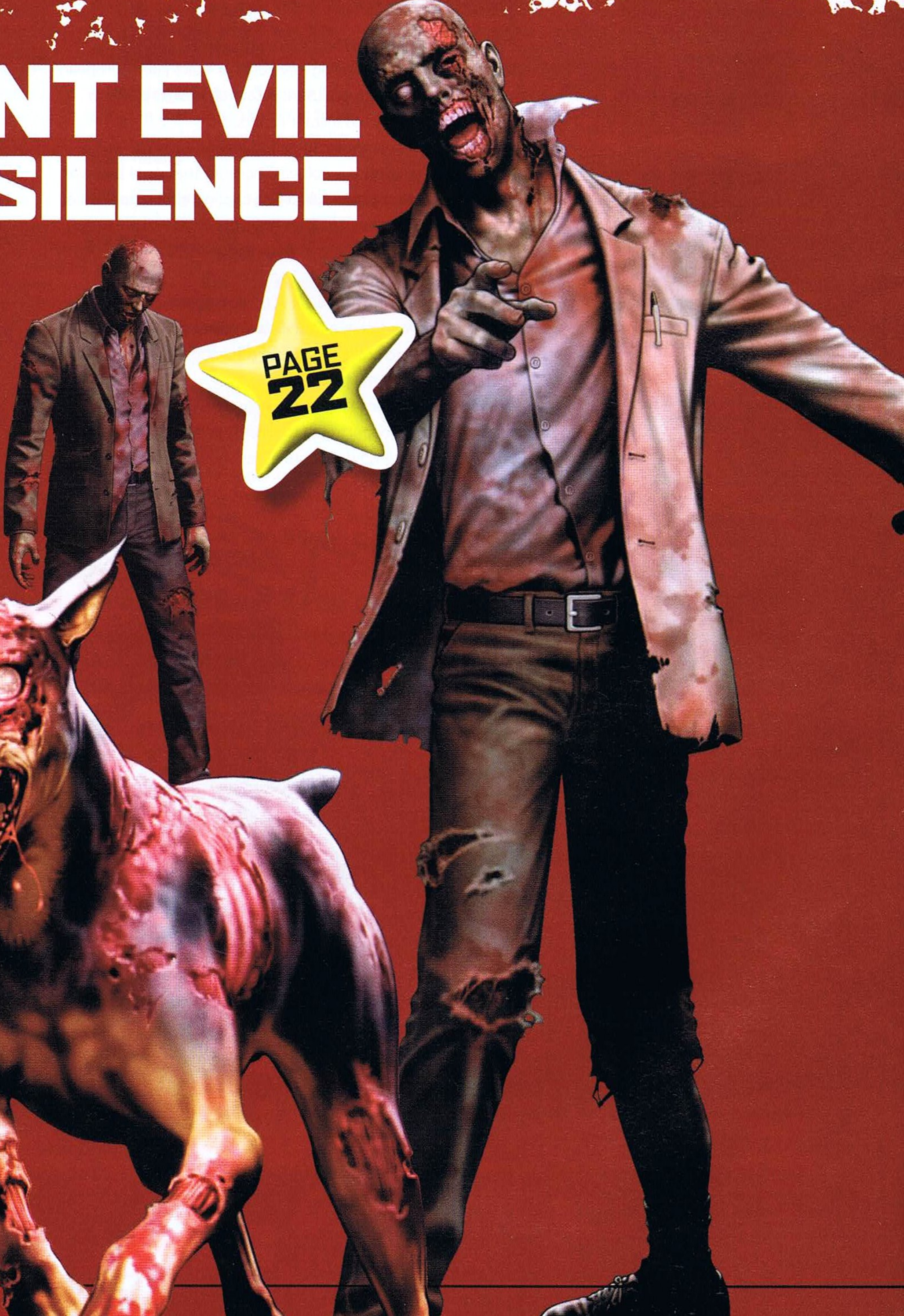
JOE WITH THE FLOW

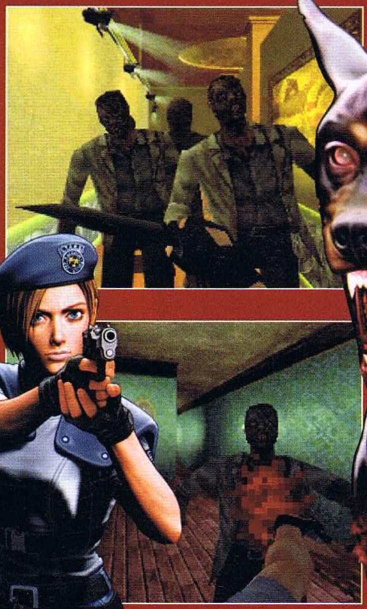
Multiplayer madness with everyone's favourite munchkin superhero. Whadda guy!

RESIDENT EVIL DEADLY SILENCE

At last – zombies in the palm of your hand!

PAGE 22













WHAT'S IN NGC?

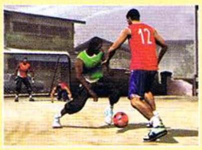
Spoiler alert! Magazine contents revealed below!

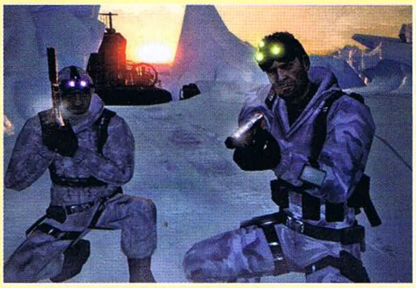
PREVIEWS

We'd review them, but they aren't finished yet.









NEWS

The pages that come with a large pinch of salt.

OTHER STUFF

Not news, not reviews, not previews… what, then?



REVIEWS

A huge GC, DS and GBA review-cake. Mmm.

OUR PROMISE

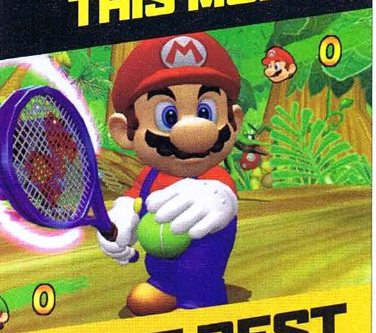
In order to get the most up-to-date gossip to you, we keep our news pages open right till the last minute. We suspect that this month we'll be forced to sprint to the printers with them in a high-speed relay and, if you've ever seen games journalists running, you'll realise what a terrifying prospect this is. If you're reading these words now, at least you know that we fought the good fight. Let's just hope no lives were lost.



NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

NEWSDESK

IN NEWS THIS MONTH



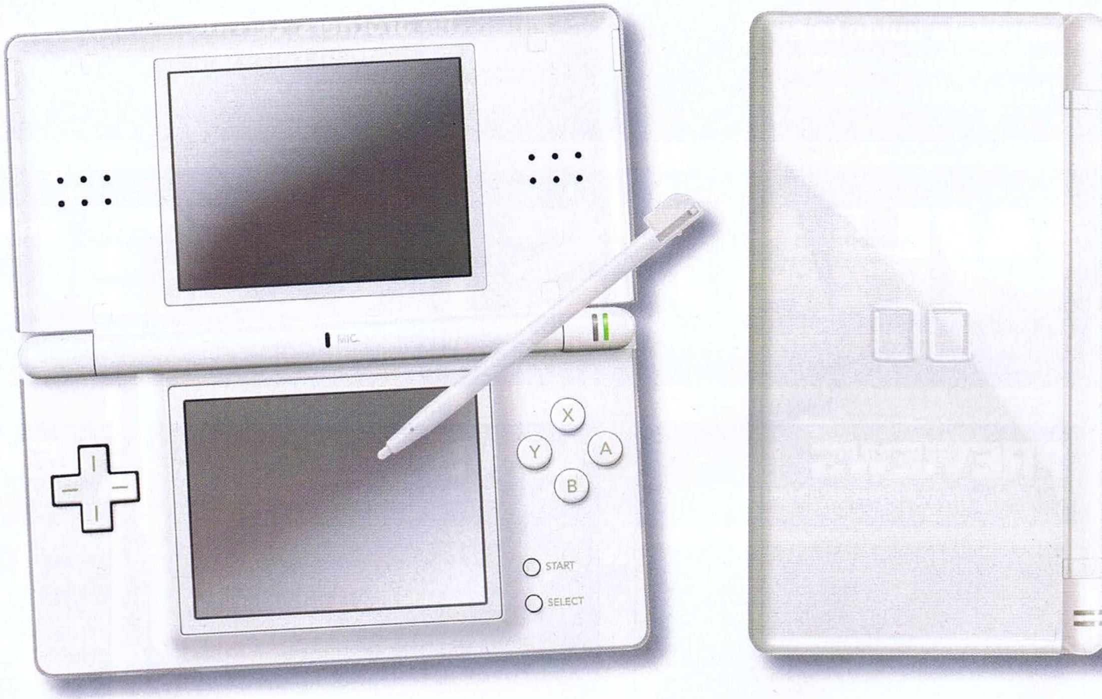
THE BEST OF 2005
WHAT DID YOU VOTE FOR? P8



WIN TOP NEW DVDS!
GET SERENITY AND RED EYE FREE! P10



PLUS!
ALL THE GREAT NEW DS GAMES COMING SOON P11
AND MORE...



NEW DS REVEALED!

It's small, sexy and utterly splendid. We want one!

Oh, it's true! Rumours have been flying around for a while now, and we speculated last issue on DS being redesigned ahead of E3, but now it's been confirmed. The new DS Lite, as it's known, is being released in Japan on 2nd March, and it's a beauty.

Announced on Nintendo's Japanese website on the morning of 26th January (a day or so after Nintendo held a London conference concerning UK DS releases for 2006, where David Yarnton – Nintendo UK's General Manager – stated that were no plans to resdesign DS), the Lite is a smaller and better-looking DS, retaining all the features and functions of the DS we know and love.

The power button has been moved to the side of the unit, as has the stylus holder, and the Start/Select duo now reside underneath the face buttons. The microphone is more central, resting on the hinge of the unit, along with the power lights.

The DS Lite's vital statistics are as follows: 133mm wide by 73.9mm tall by 21.5mm thick. In comparison, the current DS measures 148.7mm wide by 84.7mm tall by 21.5mm thick. The units weigh 218g and 275g respectively. It's therefore significantly smaller than the current DS, and the stylish new iPod-style white colour scheme makes it a lot more aesthetically appealing.

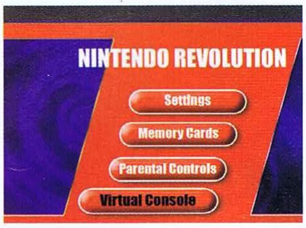
Most interestingly, DS Lite will enable you to select from four different levels of brightness, which will also have an impact on battery life – playing games on the lowest brightness setting will enable you to play for longer.

Although unconfirmed when we went to press, there have been rumours that the Lite will incorporate GBA Micro-style super-sharp screens, plus a similarly inspired D-Pad and face buttons, which would be great. Hopefully the smaller size and lighter nature of the Lite will mean it's a bit easier on the fingers than the original DS, too – those on the **NGC** team with bigger hands than most ended up in some discomfort after prolonged play. Fingers crossed, eh?

All good news, then. Unfortunately, Nintendo tell us we won't be getting the DS Lite in Europe until an unspecified time 'after the Spring', but that at least gives us time to start saving our pennies...

VIRTUAL REVOLUTION

Details of Rev's download-tastic 'virtual console'...







△ Is this the future of retro gaming?

It's been an interesting month for Revolution news, mainly because we got a peek at how the downloading capabilities of the console might look and work. Zanthus, a marketing company employed by Nintendo, put together a questionnaire for the general gaming public, including screenshots of a mocked-up 'virtual console', the name for Nintendo's Revolution-based back-catalogue download facility, along with details of how it might work and what the pricing structure might be.

As you can see from the shots on this page, it's all looking very functional at the moment, but nonetheless, it's very clear how the system works. The Revolution 'dashboard' offers options for settings, memory cards, parental controls and the virtual console itself. Choose the virtual console option and you can choose from the NES, SNES and N64, each of which has its own library of games to download.

The lists of the games are far from complete, and are surely for representative purposes only, because along with crowd pleasers like *GoldenEye* (but no *Perfect Dark*), there are some more obscure Japanese-only titles, such as *Ogre Battle 64* and *Sin and Punishment*.

The survey also offered ballpark figures for how much back-catalogue games will cost to download, ranging from $2.99 for NES games to a whopping $19.99 for N64 games. Once paid for, the selected games are downloaded to Revolution for you to play. Interestingly, there's also a rental subscription service, where for $14.99 a month, you can download games for a set amount of time.

It all seems very straightforward, and given that Revolution will connect wirelessly to your broadband connection (in as simple a manner as the DS, and using the same USB connector, we assume), it looks like there'll be a minimum of faffing around. We're not sure we like the look of the virtual console and associated menu screens, but then again, there's nothing to suggest that these are exactly what it will all look like on Revolution. Still, it looks like it's easy to use, which is the main thing, and it's all extremely heartening for the future.

As for the downloaded games themselves, we aren't expecting any changes or improvements. Apparently they'll be emulated, although they'll obviously run in a higher resolution than the original games. However, it'd be nice if a few framerate jiggles could be sorted out at last. Imagine playing a hi-res *GoldenEye* at a silky 60 frames per second. Mother!

REVOLUTION PRICING CONFIRMED

And it's definitely out this year!

This month, both Nintendo President Satoru Iwata and US Marketing Manager Reginald Fils-Aime confirmed their commitment to bringing Revolution out at an affordable price point in 2006. Good news, eh?

While neither individual confirmed a concrete date or price, both men underlined the importance of bringing the console out this year, and at a cheaper price point than that of both Xbox 360 and PS3.

Iwata, who was interviewed by Japanese newspaper Sankei Shimbun, said that the deadline for a US Revolution launch had been set at Thanksgiving, which means November at the latest, and hopefully before.

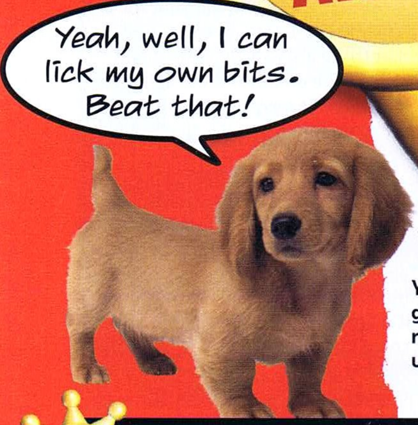
With all the whispers of a worldwide launch – something Microsoft proved can be done, despite the stock shortages of Xbox 360 – this means that we should, fingers crossed, be getting the console at the same time as the Japanese and Americans. With near-final hardware being showcased at E3 in May, we reckon (we hope!) that this is going to be the case.

Meanwhile, in an interview with website news.com, Reggie said: "We resolve at Nintendo to remain within reach for the vast majority of our consumers." Given that a price point of sub-$300 (around £200) has already been mooted by Iwata, we can expect Revolution to be significantly cheaper than Xbox 360 or PS3. Indeed, the latter, with its Blu-ray DVD drive, is expected to retail at a higher price than Xbox 360. Now if only we didn't have to wait another three months for E3...





NGC 2005 READER AWARDS...



THE VOTES ARE IN AND HAVE BEEN COUNTED, SO FIND OUT WHAT YOU THOUGHT OF THE LAST YEAR OF NINTENDO GAMING...

You saw what we thought was the cream of 2005's gaming crop in issue 115, and having compiled the results of your entries (after fishing Martin out from under the enormous pile of envelopes – he'd been missing for a couple of days, but we didn't really notice), we're proud to present the 2005 NGC Reader Awards. Read on, then, and be amazed! Apart from *Resident Evil 4* cleaning up. Nothing too amazing about that...

GAME OF THE YEAR

RESIDENT EVIL 4

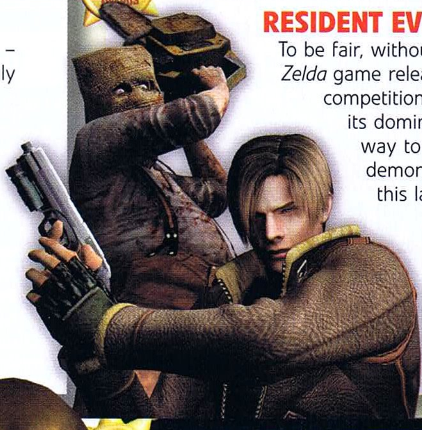
Capcom's survival horror tour de force rightly took the top spot here – it's quite simply one of the best games ever. You voted overwhelmingly for it, and despite *Mario Kart DS* amassing plenty of votes for second place, *Resi 4* was the deserving winner of this award.



BUBBLING UNDER...
Mario Kart DS, Nintendogs, Advance Wars DS.

GC GAME OF THE YEAR

RESIDENT EVIL 4



To be fair, without a new *Metroid*, *Mario* or a 'proper' *Zelda* game released this year, *Resi* didn't have the competition it might otherwise have had, and its dominance in this category goes some way to reflecting that. As well, of course, as demonstrating just how sky-slicingly brilliant this latest instalment in the series is.

BUBBLING UNDER...
Battalion Wars, Zelda: Four Swords, Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance.

DS GAME OF THE YEAR

NINTENDOGS

This was so close – *Mario Kart DS* could have been here but for a few puppy-lovin' votes. Nonetheless, Ninty's revolutionary pet sim struck out in bold new directions for videogames and also made perfect use of the DS's capabilities. And those dogs are so cute!



BUBBLING UNDER...
Mario Kart DS, Advance Wars DS, Wario Ware.

GBA GAME OF THE YEAR

GUNSTAR FUTURE HEROES

It seems that Martin's splendid review convinced quite a few of you as to the magnificent charms of this none-more-brilliant platformer-cum-blaster. And quite rightly too – *Gunstar Future Heroes* is a fantastic game! You've obviously been a lot luckier than us in tracking down a copy of it, though, because we haven't managed to find one anywhere...



BUBBLING UNDER...
Astro Boy, Mario Tennis, Pokémon Emerald.

BEST ADVENTURE

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS

Despite needing three friends, four GBAs and four link cables to enjoy properly, Link's multiplayer smorgasboard of fun tickled your fun glands enough to put it at the top of the pile. Now we just have to wait for *Twilight Princess…*



BUBBLING UNDER…
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness, Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow, Prince of Persia: Two Thrones.

BEST MULTIPLAYER

MARIO KART DS

It couldn't be anything else, really – the best *Mario Kart* ever is a multiplayer marvel! The Wi-Fi racing is superb, even if you've only got one cart between you, but playing online is where it's really at, and a pleasing amount of you have been doing just that.



BUBBLING UNDER…
Mario Power Tennis, Timesplitters Future Perfect, Advance Wars DS.

BEST SPORTS GAME

MARIO POWER TENNIS

It seems you enjoyed this as much as we did, despite the contentious issue of power shots. It's an ocean-deep game veiled with simple accessibility and big, big fun. It's interesting to note that none of you voted for the *Sega Soccer Slam*-lite shenanigans of *Mario Smash Football…*



BUBBLING UNDER…
Nintendo Touch Golf, Tony Hawk's American Sk8land, NBA Street 3.

BEST ACTION GAME

RESIDENT EVIL 4

A relentless and relentlessly thrilling rollercoaster ride of constant action, and the most cinematic slice of silicon shootery we've ever seen. Some of you reckon it's not only the best action game of 2005, but quite possibly of all time, and we can't really disagree with that.

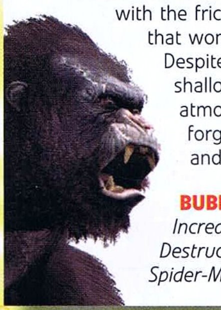


BUBBLING UNDER…
Battalion Wars, Starfox Assault, Timesplitters Future Perfect.

BEST LICENCE

KING KONG (GAMECUBE)

Not a bad year for licensed games, all told, but at the end of the day, it was the one with the frickin' enormous ape in it that won your hearts and minds. Despite being short and very shallow in places, it's got atmosphere in spades. Just forget about the woeful DS and GBA versions.

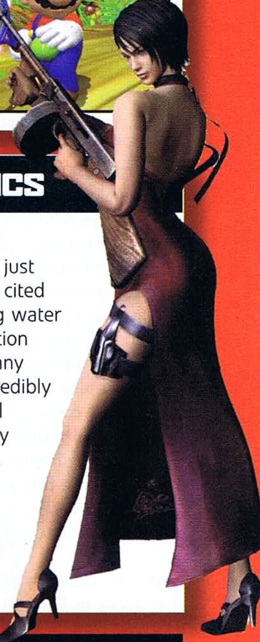


BUBBLING UNDER…
Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, Ultimate Spider-Man, FIFA 2006.

BEST GRAPHICS

RESIDENT EVIL 4

What else? This game looks just amazing. While some of you cited the invisible insects, stunning water effects and incredible animation as reasons for your vote, many more simply offered the incredibly atmospheric opening with all its autumnal hues as the only reason needed. Phenomenal.



BUBBLING UNDER…
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat, Viewtiful Joe 2, Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness.

BEST SOUND

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Complementing your votes for *Resi 4*'s stunning visuals and knife edge-honed gameplay comes the award for best sound. It actually sounds as great as it looks, and in a game like *Resident Evil 4*, that's high praise indeed. We haven't had as many sleepless nights since Reggie came to stay.



BUBBLING UNDER…
Killer 7, Donkey Konga 2, Advance Wars DS.

BEST IMPORT

CHIBI ROBO

This domestic twist on *Metroid* (minus the guns and space pirates, of course) just edged out *Phoenix Wright* as your 2005 import game of choice. And what a great choice it is too. We can only hope that the promised UK release actually comes about so everyone can see just how splendid it is.



BUBBLING UNDER…
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, Animal Crossing: Wild World, Wario Ware Twisted.

HARDEST GAME

ADVANCE WARS DUAL STRIKE

Underneath *Advance Wars*' simple exterior lies a beating heart of fiendish strategic complexity. It's never unfair, though, and some of you commented on the fact that no matter how tricky it got, you always went back for more, which befits one of DS's finest games.



BUBBLING UNDER…
Killer 7, Mario Kart DS, Resident Evil 4.

MOST ORIGINAL CONCEPT

NINTENDO DS

All those runners-up could justifiably have taken this award, but there could only ever have been one winner here. Nintendo's latest and greatest console, with its unique control system, online support, Wi-Fi multiplayer and sheer brilliance has pointed the way forward for videogames.



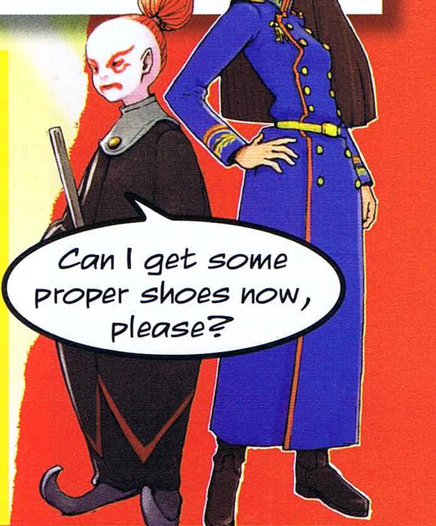
BUBBLING UNDER…
Killer 7, Nintendogs, Donkey Kong Jungle Beat.

WORST GAME OF THE YEAR

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

We can only assume that many of you bought this game because of the film it's based on, because it seems that an awful lot of you out there have played it. Still, it only just managed to beat *NFS Most Wanted* on DS to this title, which itself is a particularly festering and utterly awful pile of shovelware. Greener still gets nightmares about it.

BUBBLING UNDER…
Need for Speed Most Wanted DS, Sonic Gems Collection, Bubble Bobble Revolution.



WIN! SERENITY AND RED EYE DVDS!

Through the power of sheer luck, win films! Gosh.

Like films? Then you're in luck, because we've got some to give away. We've got three copies apiece of both Joss Whedon's sci-fi extravaganza and Wes Craven's plane-based frightener for you to win. Red Eye is out now to buy and rent, courtesy of DreamWorks, while Serenity will be on the shelves come 27th February, from Universal. However, by simply answering the following question correctly, you can get one of them for free!

Which of these is NOT a character in Serenity?
A) River Tam
B) Shepherd Book
C) Chumley Huffington

Stick your answer on the back of a postcard and send it to the following address, marking it I Want Serenity or I Want Red Eye, depending on which film you want (only one entry each, folks). We'll pick three winners apiece from the giant **NGC** Compo Tombola Of Doom, using an enormous pair of tweezers that is usually reserved for tweaking the hair out of Martin's ears (don't worry, we'll make sure we've washed it first).

I Want Serenity/I Want Red Eye
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Closing date: March 3rd. No employees of Future Publishing or their relatives may enter. Sorry, them's the rules. Good luck!



MILLSY'S METROID MADNESS

Longtime NGC reader Andrew Mills has put together a second DVD of incredible Metroid speed runs. Called Metroid In Motion 0-02, it sports runs of Metroid Prime, Metroid Prime 2: Echoes, Metroid, Super Metroid and Metroid Zero Mission. There's also a bundle of extras to gawk at, too. The DVD, along with the CD-based Symphony of Samus collection, can be purchased at www.samus.co.uk/shop.shtml.

SBK SLIDES INTO UK!

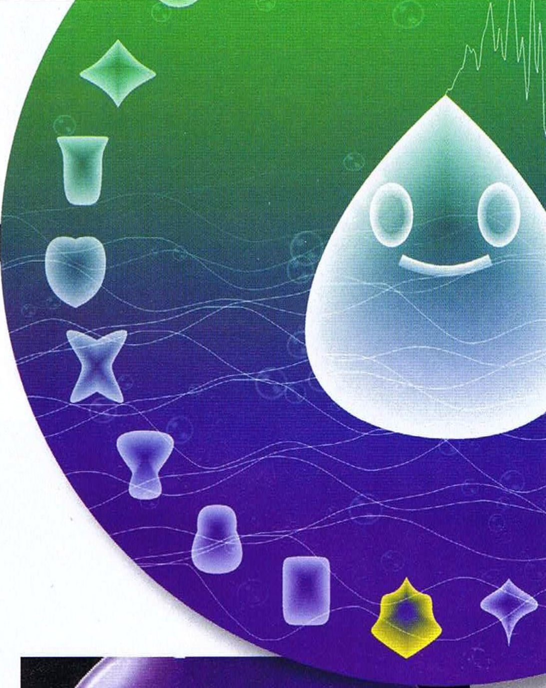
The kids are alright...

Last issue, we reviewed the US version of Atlus' cracking Snowboard Kids. We gave it 75% and, despite its faults, fell in love with it (although Kittsy won't let anyone else play it. We tried, but he's not a man to trifle with). At the time of writing, we were unsure of when it might be getting a UK release, but this month Rising Star confirmed that it'll be publishing the game in our sceptred isle in March. Which, frankly, is brilliant news. Expect a full UK review in the next issue of **NGC**!









DS GAMES FRENZY!

This Easter, we're going to be absolutely swamped...

We toddled off down to London this month to attend a Nintendo Press Conference at the Science Museum, hoping to hear about a new DS. We didn't – although one was announced a day later, as you'll have seen on page six – but we were told that a fantastic array of quirkily brilliant DS games are getting an imminent UK release, all under the umbrella of Nintendo's new slogan and strategy – "new ways to play".

First up is *Professor Kawashima's Brain Training: How Old Is Your Brain*, which has been a smash hit in Japan. As we all know, mini-games with an educational bent are the order of the day, with the intent of measuring how old your brain is (the younger the better). It's joined by a version aimed at the younger player, called *Big Brain Academy*, in May.

Elsewhere, March 31st sees the release of the brilliant *Animal Crossing: Wild World* and the equally splendid *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney*, with ER simulator *Trauma Center: Under The Knife* coming in April. Finally, brain-melting music thing *Electroplankton* arrives on April 21st. It's fabulous news that these games, which might otherwise be seen as quirky Japanese fare rather than simply top-notch games, are getting high-profile UK releases, and it just goes to show that Nintendo's confidence in the DS is enormous. Of course, it's easy to see why, with one million DS's being sold in under a year in the UK.

And why was the conference held at the Science Museum? Because Ninty is sponsoring the place to the tune of £1 million, with a focus on the science and technology-based Launch Pad gallery, along with the excellent Game On exhibition, that's arrives at the Science Museum later this year and lasts into 2007.

Although this year's E3 will obviously see Revolution as this year's big news, at the moment, 2006 is definitely the year of DS.



△ ***Electroplankton*** **allows you to make as much bleep-blork music marvelry as your heart desires. Yipper.**





△ ***Animal Crossing: Wild World*** **lets you create your own constellations, just like God. Sort of. A bit.**

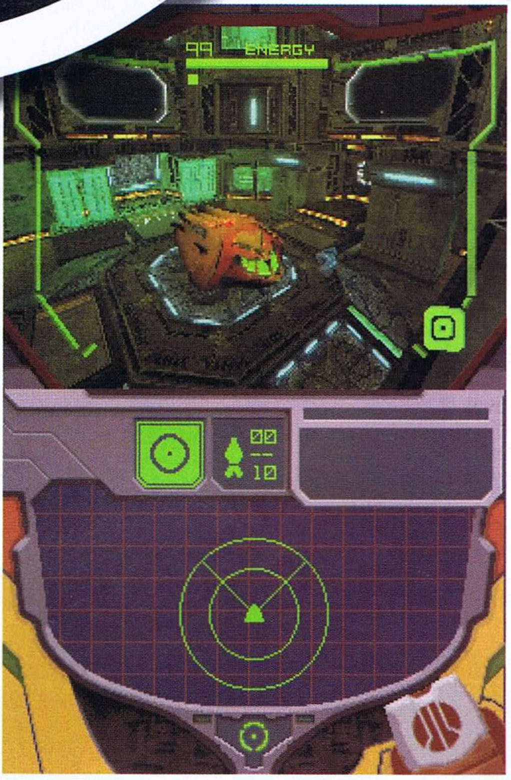


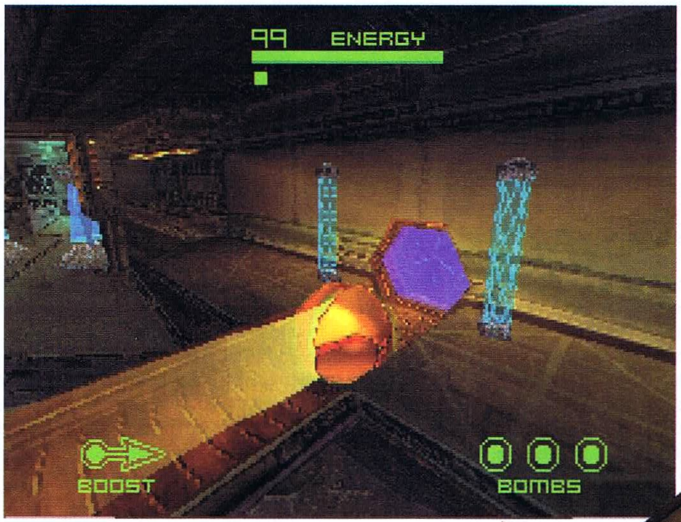
△ **If you've ever wanted to shout 'objection!' in court,** ***Pheonix Wright: Ace Attorney*** **lets you do just that.**



△ **Little Tom East reckons this is 'the best game ever'. He's always like the insides of people a little too much.**

DID YOU KNOW? Originally, the game wasn't going to be online at all. Nintendo reckoned it was just too complex, but they obviously underestimated themselves. It'll be the fourth online DS game after *Mario Kart*, *Tony Hawk* and *Animal Crossing*.







△ The touch screen is designed in the shape of the visor of whichever bounty hunter you're using. Neat.



METROID PRIME HUNTERS

The hunt is on! Samus is in the Prime of her life with her latest and greatest intergalactic extravaganza...



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **Samus Aran returns in a game set between *Metroid Prime* and *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*.**
- **Hefty single-player game that sees you up against six rival bounty hunters.**
- **Online multiplayer support for four players.**

FACTFILE

Who's making it?

NSTC

What have they done before?

Wave Race Blue Storm (NGC/67, 90%)

Fittingly splendid sequel to the classic N64 original. Best. Water. EVER. And then some.

It's almost too much to take. *Advance Wars*, *Nintendogs*, *Mario Kart*, and now this. The DS has eaten up our free time with the voracious hunger of a starving hippo over the last six months, and the impending arrival of *Metroid Prime Hunters* means that our significant others are going to be bereft of any worthwhile conversation for a good while longer. The reason? *Hunters* is just fabulous, a knockout translation of the franchise to the unique charms of DS. And this raft of new screenshots – look around you and let your eyes be bathed in their wonder – shows exactly why. Compare them to the splendid *First Hunt* demo bundled with DS and you'll see that *Hunters* is now a far richer and more vivid experience. And look at the scale of it! There are some superbly towering rooms.

> "HUNTERS IS JUST FABULOUS, A KNOCKOUT TRANSLATION OF THE FRANCHISE TO DS"

However, it seems the game is going to play a little differently to its Gamecube big brothers, *Metroid Prime* and *Echoes*. Of course, there's the same morph ball action, scanning and gun-arm blasting, but the emphasis in *Hunters* is not on isolation, as it was on the Gamecube, but rather on intense rivalry and competition.

Samus is no longer exploring by herself. She's tasked with retrieving artefacts of unimaginable power from the Alimbic Cluster, and there are six rival bounty hunters out for both her and the "secret of ultimate power" that





△ **A pretty artefact, yesterday.**



△ **Could this be a boss of some sort?**







△ **There's a big single-player game along the same lines as *Prime* and *Echoes*.**

the collected artefacts will provide. Essentially, then, the game is about grabbing the artefacts before your rivals, or hunting them down and stealing the items back from them.

It sounds more straightforward than the mind-scramblingly intricate explorathons that we're used to on Gamecube, but each of the six worlds in the game (which we're presuming will each house one of the rival bounty hunters) is still rife with nooks and crannies to poke around in. We're also sure that with the morph ball and scanning capability intact, there's going to be a lot more to *Hunters* than initially meets the eye.

Scanning itself is activated via the touch screen. Holding down a small icon with the stylus drops the scan visor down, and when you hold down the left shoulder button, you can then look around and scan whatever's in your immediate environment. It works well enough, although some of us have a love-hate relationship with the amount of scanning that went on in the Gamecube *Metroids*. Nevertheless, the atmosphere rivals the tension and mystery of *Prime* and *Echoes*, and scanning is a big part of that, with you uncovering information piece by piece so you can work out exactly what's going on.

The controls are the same as in the *First Hunt* demo, which is to say that they're extremely good and make you wonder how we ever got by without a touch screen on our handheld consoles. Compare playing *Doom* on GBA to this and there are light years of distance between them. You use the thumb strap nubbin to look around (via the touch pad) and the face buttons to move (in a *GoldenEye* style) in a setup that just feels incredibly natural, akin to using a mouse and the



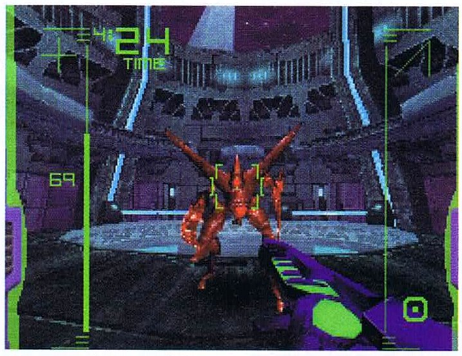
HUNTERS AND HUNTED

Say hello to a motley selection of bounty hunters...

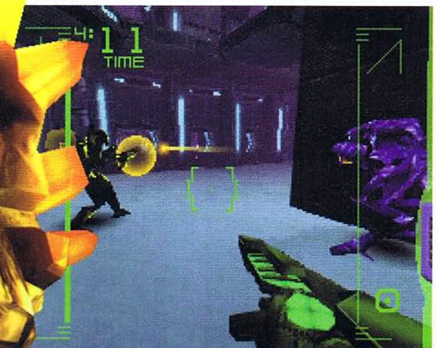




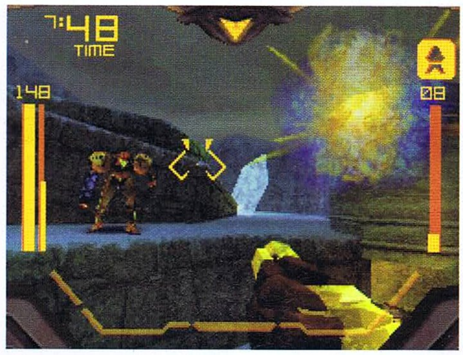
This is Kanden, a lab-grown ultimate warrior. He turns into a snake instead of a morph ball.



Trace is a Kriken, exiled from his race until he can find a suitable planet for them to invade. Not very nice!



We're playing as Sylux here. He's been tracking Samus for years. Nasty man.



You can play as all the bounty hunters in the multiplayer modes, including the lovely Samus Aran herself.



△ **The control is superb.**



WASD keys *[blork! Ed]* on a PC shooter. Of course, this means that *Hunters* plays a lot more like a traditional FPS than the Gamecube *Metroids*, hence the greater emphasis on shooting and, indeed, hunting. Jumping is still activated by double-tapping the touch screen, and it's still a little clumsy, but we're sure it'll soon become second nature with a bit of practice. Weapons, including missiles, are similarly selected from the touch screen.

One big difference with *Hunters* is that Samus will start out fully tooled up – there'll be no carefully contrived excuse to rid our heroine of her powers so she can then regain them. Of course, there are the usual power-ups like extra

WI-FI WONDER

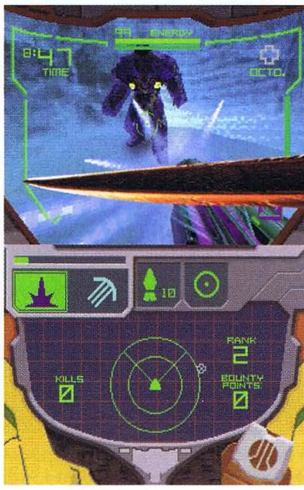
We've had a crack at Wi-Fi Hunters and found it to be very slick. You can gather friend codes by putting the DS to sleep, like the 'bark mode' in Nintendogs. Walk around town with it, and when you get back you'll have a fresh list of local rivals to pwn. Yes!











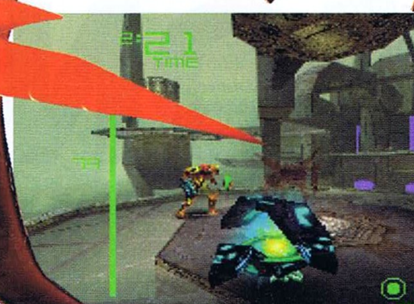
△ There's a huge variety of weapons, above and beyond what was in *Prime*.



△ The deathmatch arenas are all intricately detailed. We can't wait!







missile upgrades and energy tanks, but the main collectibles this time around will be a vast array of weapons. Each of the six enemy bounty hunters sports their own specific weaponry too, along with their own visor interfaces on the touch screen, which is nice to see.

So the single-player experience is looking cracking, and set to offer a comparably meaty challenge to its Gamecube brothers. However, it's perhaps the multiplayer game that's the most exciting element. With fully playable online four-player gaming over Nintendo's Wi-Fi service, it's going to be incredible, and quite possibly even better than *Mario Kart*. There'll also apparently be 25 deathmatch arenas, three modes (including Capture the Flag) and the ability to play as the six enemy bounty hunters – Noxus, Sylux, Spire, Trace, Kanden and, er, Weavel.

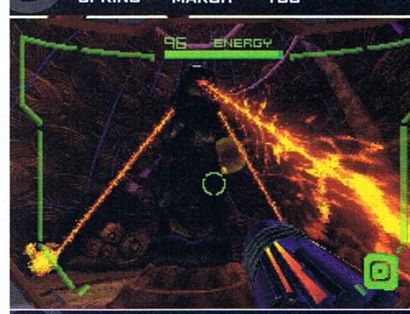
As we've already said, each bounty hunter has their own specific weaponry, and, it seems, their own particular morph ball powers. Also, the arenas themselves look fabulous – they're massive, multi-tiered affairs that run at 30 frames per second. Super-smooth, then, and quite the technical achievement.

The game is out in the US on March 20th, but at the time of writing, no UK release date has been specified. Given that the US and UK releases of *Mario Kart* were very close, we're hoping against hope that the same will be true of *Metroid Prime: Hunters*, as we simply can't wait to get hooked up with what's not only the first ever handheld online first-person shooter, but also a wonderful evolution of the *Metroid* series. It'll provide as immersive and addictive an experience as its Gamecube big brothers. Believe it!

"THE SINGLE-PLAYER GAME IS LOOKING CRACKING, AND SET TO OFFER A MEATY CHALLENGE"

NGC VERDICT

UK	US	JAPAN
SPRING	MARCH	TBC



This is going to be brilliant, with a heaving single-player mode chock full of *Metroid* goodness, and a fabulous online-enabled multiplayer component too. It's been a long time coming, but the wait is going to be worth it.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 **5**

MEET THE TEAM

Apparently, the Sonic franchise doesn't have quite enough characters yet. New faces for *Sonic Riders* include Wave the Swallow, Storm the Albatross and Jet the Hawk. He's a 'legendary wind master' you know.



△ These hedgehogs cope surprisingly well on busy roads.



△ The cutscenes are like fingernails down a blackboard.



△ The start is bizarre. The idea is to run backwards a bit and then time your forward sprint so you cross the line just as the timer hits zero. Get it wrong and you're punished with a nice bit of electric shock. Charming.

SONIC RIDERS

The game that's otherwise known as 'Sonic Air Ride'. No, wait – come back! It's not that bad!

Three dread words pop into your head the first time you see *Sonic Riders* in action: 'Kirby', 'Air' and 'Ride'. Characters ride around on floating surfboards without an accelerate button, there are twisty-turny tracks and auto-guiding rails, and even the cornering technique (hold, skid aaand boost) is reminiscent of The Nintendo-Published Game That We Gave 51%.

Thankfully, that's where the similarities end. *Sonic Riders* is a fun, hair-rustling rollercoaster of a racer, where things happen so fast that your primal finger-twitching reactions have to take care of things while your brain sits dazed on the starting line. The version we played wasn't perfect – if the final release retains the grating commentator who never shuts up about how "Sonic is losing momentum!", we'll tear our own ears off. Still, after rubbish like *Sonic Adventure 2*, this is a breath of fresh air.

Actually, it's more like a blast of fresh air. *Sonic Riders* is all about turbulence – whirling tunnels of air trailed by the hoverboard riders ahead, which drag you around the course at a crazy but delicious speed if you manage to manoeuvre inside them. Slipstreaming and mid-air stunts are the only way to keep your board's air supply healthy, in fact – fail to surf the wind tubes or somersault off ramps and your board will slow down until your rider actually hops off and starts walking.

Get it right and it's dizzyingly fast. The corkscrewing courses have the colourful look and slick feel of levels from Sonic's 3D platformers, except now that you're off the ground and don't have to worry about bumping into enemies or fiddling with the camera from hell, they actually work. And there are some fairly 'out there' moments that make things more interesting than your average racer, such as bouncing off a spider's web and landing on a giant centipede.

There's a lot to think about in *Sonic Racers*. Collecting coins increases your max speed; B boosts you past obstacles and lets you punch rivals to overtake; and depending on whether your rider is a Speed, Boost or Flying type, you'll be able to soar through overhead rings or launch yourself off ramps.

It's not always clear what's going on – blink and you'll miss the reason why you ended up on a walkway miles above everyone else – but with practice, getting around the courses without bumping your nose has that *F Zero*-esque thrill about it.

So, *Kirby's Air Ride* plus *Sonic Heroes* plus *SSX* adds up to a lot more than you might expect. It's padded out with the usual assortment of fur-covered idiots and cutscenes that couldn't be more badly acted if David Caruso turned up, but our thrill-o-meter is buzzing in Sonic's presence for the first time since the old Megadrive days. You'll find our definitive verdict in the next issue.

> **"GETTING AROUND THE COURSES WITHOUT BUMPING YOUR NOSE HAS THAT F-ZERO-ESQUE THRILL"**



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **They call it 'a new blend of snowboarding, surfing and high-speed racing combat'.**
- **Over 13 'outrageous' hover tracks, stuffed with shortcuts and multiple routes.**
- **Extreme Gear (hoverboards) are customisable, with 40 types of equipment available.**

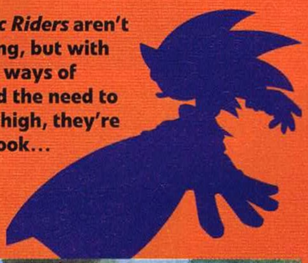
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Sonic Team

What have they done before?
Sonic Heroes (NGC/91, 65%)
A very unpleasant triple-hero platformer that's right at home on Sonic's rubbish 3D CV.

STAY ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The courses in *Sonic Riders* aren't necessarily very long, but with countless alternate ways of getting around, and the need to keep your air level high, they're trickier than they look…





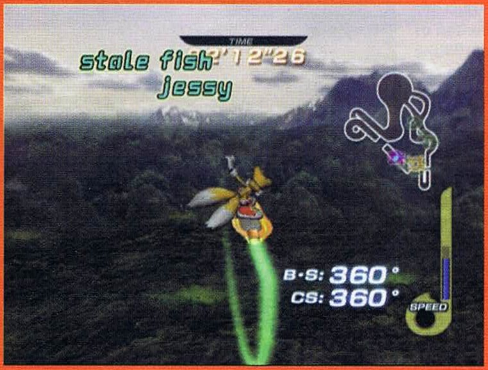
SPLASH CANYON

Riding the rapids under blue skies is lovely. There's a bit where you blast up a waterfall and then plunge back down again. We sat too close to the TV and felt quick sick.



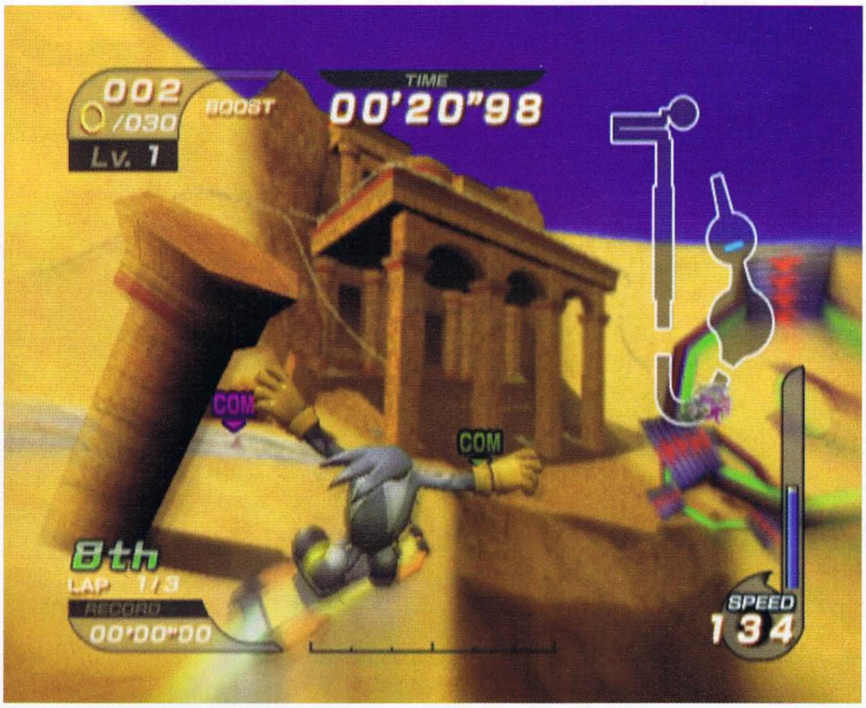
EGG FACTORY

Dr Eggman's territory is all 90-degree turns and drops into boiling hot lava, which makes it very satisfying to get all the way around without coming a cropper on a corner.



GREEN CAVE

This is the one with 'the centipede incident'. The point where you get catapulted into the air by a spider's web and end up looking down on the whole forest is breathtaking.



This bit's 'brilliant' – if you fall, you're put back at a spot that guides you straight over the same cliff.



Getting caught in turbulence here is much more pleasant than the mid-flight experience.



During the traditional *Sonic* autopilot sections, going spinny on the stick ups your airometer.



Battle mode, yes. But it's a bit rubbishly floaty.



Strange checkpoint/ring race? Fun for a bit.

NGC VERDICT

UK 17 MAR | US 21 FEB | JAPAN TBC



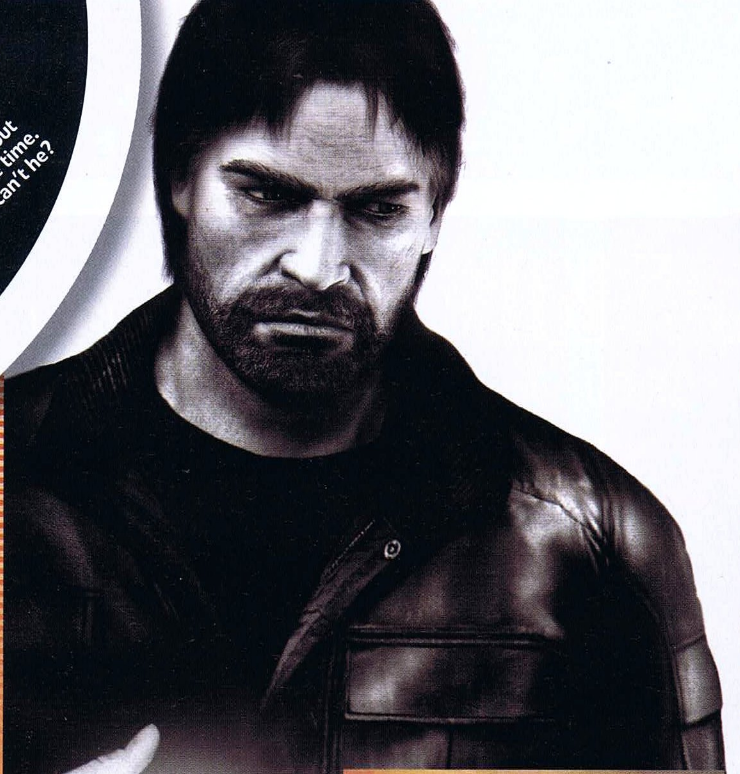
Don't knock it – they laughed at the idea of putting Mario in a go-kart too. The speed of *Sonic Riders* seems like the perfect fit for the ever-impatient hedgehog, and when you get into a groove – whisking along those turbulence tunnels with the scenery pelting past you at 200mph – it's incredibly exhilarating. Just a shame about the commentary, really.

ANTICIPATION RATING

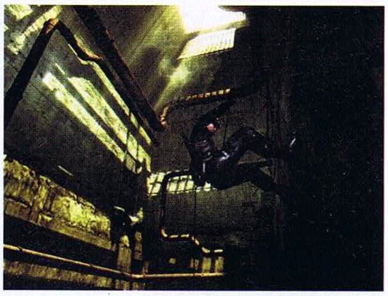


Clancy!

NGC wordsmith Mark Green once interviewed Tom Clancy. He talked about himself in the third-person the whole time. Still, he can afford to be eccentric, can't he?









△ **Fisher looks silly *without* the silly goggles.**



△ **Such dainty gloves, don't you think?**



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **Nine solo levels and around a dozen dedicated co-op levels.**
- **Three different endings, depending on whether you're naughty or nice to your enemies.**
- **A range of new non-lethal weapons, such as a gun that fires rubber bullets. Thwock!**

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Ubisoft

What have they done before?
Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow (NGC/97 78%)
The second slice o' *Splintsy* and a big improvement on the first.

SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

Another kind of cell awaits the Fisher man in his latest mission.

As one fan puts in online: "Omfg kick a*** – this game is gonna be ill-nasty, fo sho." Which we *think* means that Sam Fisher's fourth game of hide and seek is looking like the tastiest tip-toeing treat in the series so far.

Our first play of *Splinter Cell: Double Agent* dished more dirt on the plot, which sees a shaven-headed Fisher purposefully banged up in prison in order to infiltrate John Brown's Army, a group of very bad men indeed. You need to persuade fellow inmate and JBA member Jamie Washington that you're a proper crim, which leads to some moral dilemmas. Will you beat up guards? Kill them? There'll be different endings depending on how nice or nasty you go.

There are also new features like 'alarm cancelling' – the guards have four stages of suspicion, and if you hit stage four, you need to capture someone and force them to announce over the intercom that it was a false alarm. There's also an integrated co-op mode, and you'll only find out the full details of the plot if you play with a mate. Find out more next issue!

> **"SAM FISHER'S FOURTH GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK IS LOOKING LIKE THE TASTIEST TREAT..."**

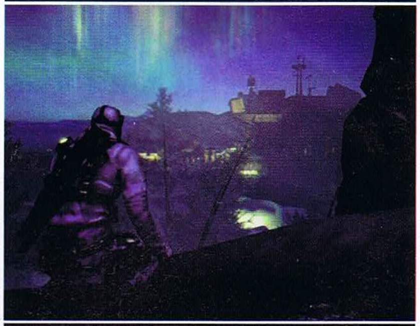




△ **Our advice to terrorists: stop stacking crates at man height.**

NGC VERDICT

UK SPRING | US SPRING | JAPAN TBA



After three great but samey *Splinter Cells*, this could the one to give the franchise the shot of adrenaline it needs. The Gamecube-controlled helpers will effectively bring *Chaos Theory's* co-op mode (*award-winning* co-op mode, mark you) to people without any friends – which *should* be brilliant. More next month.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 **5**

RAINBOW ISLANDS

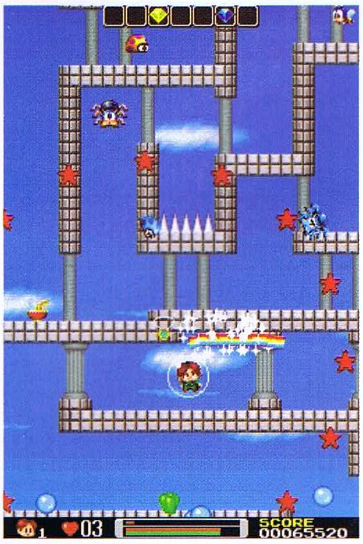
Get ready to taste the rainbow.

The original *Rainbow Islands* is without question one of the greatest platform games ever made. The vertical rainbow-fuelled play is totally unique, and it's totally unafraid of syrupy cuteness and juicy fruit bonuses. And it's the sequel to *Bubble Bobble*, which is undeniably one of the greatest platform games ever made.

What is uncertain is whether anyone is going to mess this up like they messed up *Bubble Bobble Revolution* (**NGC**/113, 1/5). Fingers crossed, no. *Rainbow Islands Revolution* clearly isn't your traditional colour-chucking romp, since Bub and Bob are trapped in floaty bubbles now, and the aim is to glide upwards, 'parking' in safe places and using the stylus to scribble enemy-scuppering rainbows. Still, it seems to work well from what we've seen so far, and the spirit of the 20-year-old original game – pretty levels, adorable enemies, shedloads of power-ups and the rainbows of fruit flavour – seems intact.

Harvest Moon artist Igusa Matsuyama, who designed *Bubble Bobble Revolution*'s visuals, is back on board for this. Later levels include more puzzly elements, such as fans that cruelly waft you onto the kind of spikes that bubbles find it difficult to make friends with.

We'll find out if our bubbly excitement is popped next issue.



△ **Red stars make mincemeat of an entire screenful of evil, just like the old days.**



△ **The redesigns of the old Rainbow Island's characters are, thankfully, okay.**



△ **Fingers crossed, this'll be ace.**

FIFA STREET 2

Don't worry, they stopped all the traffic before kick off…

Positive change one: the goalkeepers have learned how to save. Positive change two: legendary legs like Pele, Gazza and Cantona are in. Really positive change three: the pathetic commentary from So Solid Crew's MC Harvey is out. If EA keeps this up, we're going to have a smile wider than a goalmouth when *FIFA Street 2* kicks off.

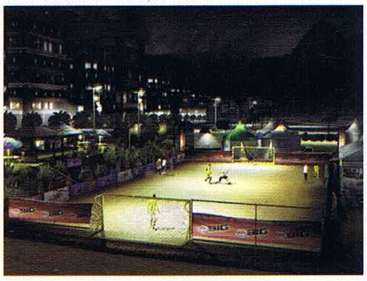
This sequel is putting more emphasis on combos, tricks and silk-o-skills than the horribly weak *FIFA Street* episode one. The new 'thing' is ball juggling like some crazy foot-handed clown, and together with a refined trick system and some preposterously powerful Extreme Shots, it delivers something like 200 different moves in all. That's enough to let you 'rule the streets' with the kind of footwork that pours water on Michael Flatley's 'feet of flame'.

Clearly, if you're after a game of football that's as serious as Sven's face, you should steer well clear. If you're after Ronaldo ricocheting a ball off Rome's claustrophobic alleyways before ramming it impossibly past the keeper from the halfway spot, get in line.

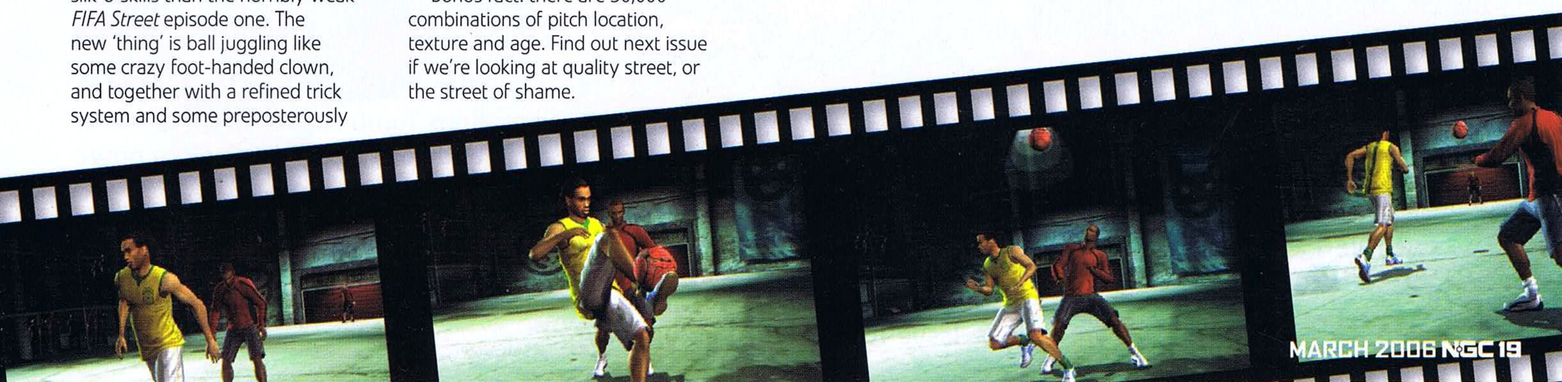
Bonus fact: there are 30,000 combinations of pitch location, texture and age. Find out next issue if we're looking at quality street, or the street of shame.











VIDEOGAME CULTURE

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THE RISE AND RISE OF NINTENDO

And how the new DS Lite will help to drive the revolution...



XBOX 360 IN JAPAN

Final Fantasy's Sakaguchi leads the new game wave on Microsoft's console

LONG LIVE LIVE ARCADE

How Xbox 360 is safeguarding game history – and bringing indie development to the world

QUAKE WARS

The UK team leading id's FPS into Battlefield territory

THE HOUSE OF LARA

Eidos: from Tomb Raider to the brink of collapse and back again – so where now?

PREVIEWED ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS **FAR CRY INSTINCTS: THE NEXT CHAPTER** EM ENCHANT ARM
REVIEWED BLACK **FULL AUTO** MARK ECKO'S GETTING UP **24** TOCA 3 **LEMMINGS** THE PLAN **SEGA RALLY 2006**

Issue 160 on sale February 16

OUR PROMISE
Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC **THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!**

REVIEWS




RESIDENT EVIL DS

Who let the (zombie) dogs out? Capcom introduces *Resident Evil* to DS with a host of touch-screen additions, and enough undead shamblers to eat the brain-population of Milton Keynes… **P22**

VIEWTIFUL JOE RED HOT RUMBLE

More mind-scrambling four-player fisticuffs in the mould of *Smash Bros*… **P30**





PLUS!



WARIO WARE TWISTED!
At long last, *Twisted!* gets a UK release. **P34**

METROID PINBALL
Much, *much* better than *Super Mario Ball*… **P36**

POCKET DOGS
Discover why there's no reason to own this. (Clue: it's *Nintendogs*.) **P40**

NAMCO MUSEUM
More crusty old classics from yesteryear for you to rediscover. **P42**

CRAZY FROG
No prizes for guessing just how woeful and annoying this is… **P44**

SEGA CASINO
Blackjack, poker and many more in the best way to gamble. **P61**

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured this game is absolute crud.

25-49
A disappointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74
Some great bits, some not-so great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89
Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+
Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.

NGC STAR GAME

MEET THE NGC TEAM

So what would you do if you were a brain-hungry zombie? Hmm?



MARTIN
"Oh, you know, I'd probably just beat the guttersnipes outside my local Co-op with the wet end of my leg stump."



GERAINT
"There's no benefit to being a zombie, is there? Apart from the fact that I may now have better luck with the ladies."



GREENER
"It's certainly done wonders for my personal hygiene – the rotting flesh now covers up the smell of damp cabbage."



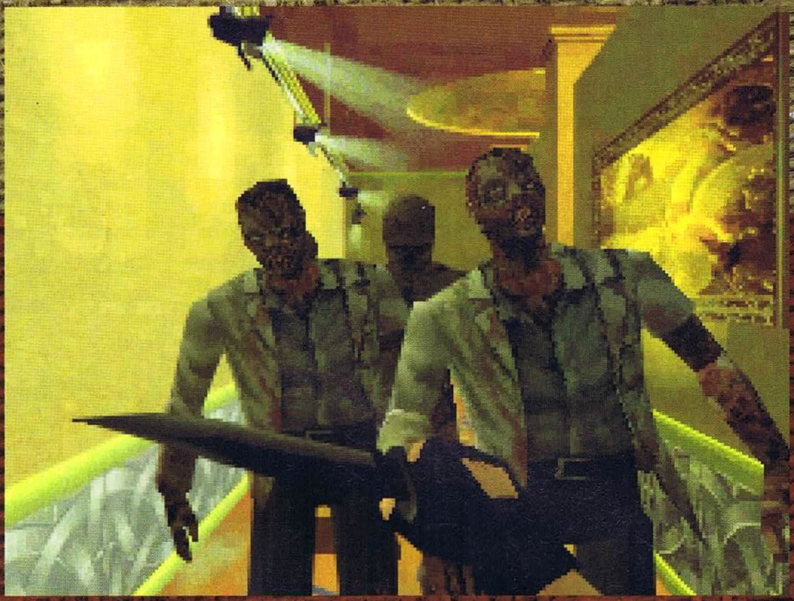
JES
"I could fetch my own bones, I guess. And I've always wanted to wee on a lamppost. Never had the courage, though."



△ Our hero locates a pot of fresh basil – ideal for adding that finishing touch to his pasta sauce.



△ The co-operative mode in action. You can tell because the second player is a sexy blue triangle. You heard.



△ Zombies! A bit predictable, really, but at least you can slash their ugly faces off. Nice.

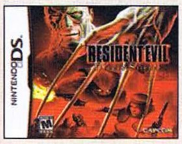


RESIDENT EVIL™ Deadly Silence

I love a party with a happy atmos-fear! Capcom shrinks its zombies for Resi's first DS outing…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE	MARCH 31
PLAYERS	1-4
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
WI-FI	YES
MIC	YES
COST	¥5040 (£25)



The DS is amazing; a genuinely innovative machine that has played host to a clutch of similarly innovative software. Just think of *Nintendogs, Advance Wars DS, Mario and Luigi: Partners in Time* and *Wario Ware*. And then there's *Mario Kart* – if anyone had told us back in the N64 days that we would one day be playing Nintendo's racing wonder over the internet from a handheld console, we'd have tied you to a stake and burnt you as a witch. But it's true. How brilliant is that?

And now here comes *Resident Evil: Deadly Silence*. With the astonishing *Resident Evil 4* reinventing the series wholesale on Gamecube, surely the survival horror franchise's first appearance on DS will perform a similar trick. At least, that's what we've all been hoping. The truth, however, has proven to be rather more disappointing. While *Resident Evil*, no matter which iteration you play, will always provide fantastic entertainment, *Deadly Silence* is a rather more modest proposal than we might have hoped. But just how modest? And can the exhumation of a decade-old game provide the gaming fun we need on Nintendo's amazing new wonder-console?

Open the door, enter the mansion, hold on to your brains and prepare to find out…

A TOUR OF HELL

Come! Join us for a tour of Raccoon City's finest holiday destination: a splendid regency mansion complete with a charming infestation of the undead, and with a few unique security features…



△ Here's the room where you meet your very first zombie. Predictably, he's not too happy to see you and will promptly try to eat your face. Which isn't very sociable, really.



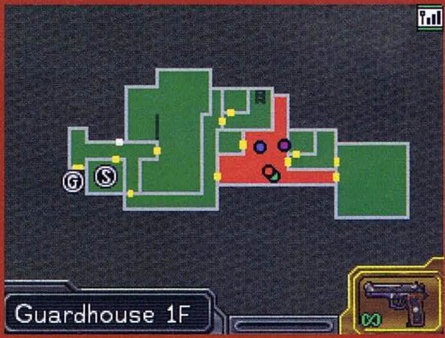
△ Back downstair in the banquet hall, your rather disbelieving chum Barry shows his manly credentials by shooting another shambler until he's properly dead all over again. Nice.



△ This room was a bit tricky in Japanese – it's the one where you have to click the switches underneath the paintings in order, going from a young infant all the way to, er, death. Pleasant.



△ There are a lot of corridors that you'll be seeing time and time again as you run back and forth. You might as well get used to it now, because they aren't particularly interesting.



△ The top screen of the DS always shows a map, which is dead handy. So, despite all those indentikit corridors, you'll never get lost again. Unless you're really, really rubbish.



△ Outside, you'll find another unfortunate former teammate. He's holding the grenade launcher, and you just know that's going to come in useful. Pinch it off him, but be ready for a nasty surprise…



△ The exterior locations obviously aren't as good-looking as they are on Gamecube, but at least they provide a welcome change of scenery. And lots more murderous crows.



△ Who'd have thought it? Connected to the house is a giant underground lab full of things man was not meant to know. Typical – bloody scientists and their infernal experiments, eh?



△ Say hello to a big nasty bad guy. Still, he's nothing a knife won't sort out. Hang on… a puny little knife? We must be mad! Look at the size of him! Ah well, them's the breaks in *Resident Evil*…



PLAY TOGETHER

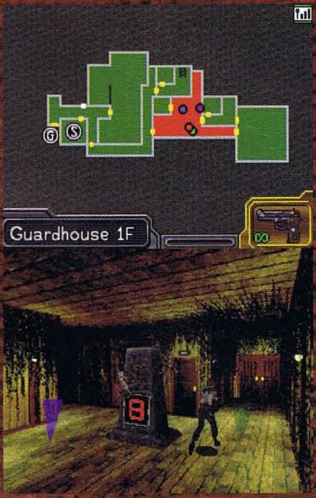
The multiplayer modes allow you to play co-operatively, as well as competitively…



Up to four players can play co-operatively, although, annoyingly, the three other players are presented as coloured icons, which is a bit poor. It's a bit odd to wander around and see a green triangle kill zombies…



By completing the main game, you can open up multiplayer 'skins' of different characters, which is a nice bonus. However, it's only you that will see the new character, which makes it a little pointless.



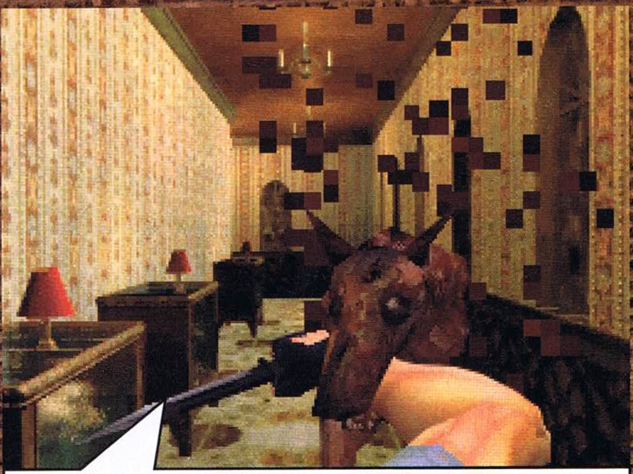
The co-op mode sees you not only killing zombies and monsters together, but also solving puzzles. If everyone's got a cart – there's no single-cart download – up to four players can join in the fun.



△ So many zombie dogs, so little time. It's a hard life, being a S.T.A.R.S. team member.



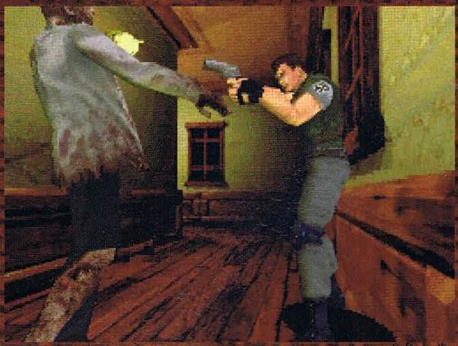
△ The game actually looks a lot better in real life, when it's moving, than it does in static screenshots.



KNIFE SENTENCE

The best elements of the new touch-screen additions are definitely the first-person scenes. You can slash at enemies by drawing the stylus across the screen – a lucky hit will knock zombies back – or tapping it will see you stab rapidly. It certainly makes a change to shooting at enemies you can't see because of the static camera angles.

"It remains an absorbing experience"



△ If you've let a zombie get this close, it's time to run. Or at least leave a decoy brain on the floor.



△ Another touch screen puzzle, involving what we old timers like to call a 'gramophone', or 'record player'.



△ Much hilarity ensues when the characters start talking. It's worse than an episode of Eldorado.





△ The first zombie you meet. He's happily tucking away into some brains, the lucky fella.

Remember when you were a kid and were frightened by whatever imagined bogeyman lived under the bed? And how, when you grew up, you marvelled at how on earth you could be frightened by something so preposterous? Playing *Resident Evil: Deadly Silence* is a bit like that. It's a childhood memory of something terrifying that, in the cold light of day and ten years after the fact, isn't quite what you thought it was.

After the exquisite Gamecube-specific retooling of *Resident Evil*, the leech-infested *Resident Evil Zero* and, of course, the astonishing action movie on steroids that is *Resident Evil 4*, playing *Deadly Silence* is like a flick-book animation of a stick man compared to a DVD home cinema system playing something very impressive indeed. Essentially the original PSone *Resident Evil* with some DS-specific touch-screen moments shoehorned in for the dramatically titled Rebirth mode, it's both a reminder of how quickly technology moves and a quaint reminder of how easily impressed we were back in the day. And yet, despite this, it still generates a palpable atmosphere, even on a tiny handheld console, and it remains an absorbing experience. How can this be, especially since we've played this game countless times before? It's a mystery.

By rights, it shouldn't work at all. This is a ten-year-old game and something we've all played to death, if not in its original form then certainly as the aforementioned Gamecube re-imagining. Everything about it is as familiar as the sight that awaits us in the mirror every morning: the dog leaping through the window, the lowering ceiling



ACTING UP

Remember the stunning rendered intro for *Resi* on Gamecube? Well, it's back to the awfully acted video of the original game for DS. Mostly in black and white, it doesn't even remain full-screen for most of the time – some scenes have huge borders. Still, it's good for a laugh.

> **"IT GENERATES A PALPABLE ATMOSPHERE, EVEN ON A TINY HANDHELD CONSOLE"**

DENIZENS OF THE DARK

Say hello to the critters that want to eat your brains. Mmm, brains…



Your friends and ours, the zombies return once again to try to eat your face. Sadly, there don't seem to be any of the vicious Crimson Heads from the Gamecube version of Resi – the ones that rise again if you don't burn them into crispy little bits of undead shambler.



Those annoying crows are still around. Slashing them with the knife works best.



Arachnophobes beware – the giant spider returns in Deadly Silence.





△ Jill! There's a zombie right behind you! Good lord.



△ Giant evil wasps. The last thing a girl needs.

after you've grabbed the shotgun, the evil undead plant, and some of the most terrible dialogue ever committed to a game. The opening intro is ripped straight from the PSone, all mugging to camera and hideously over-enunciated (and yep, the immortal "master of unlocking" line makes it through intact), while the voice samples throughout the game proper are universally dreadful. Once upon a time this game made us jump and shiver; it's astonishing to believe that nowadays, given the atmosphere-shredding clunkiness of the voice acting and 'drama'.

The game looks okay on DS – certainly superior to the PSone version – but given the fixed camera angles and the size of the DS screen, it's sometimes very hard to see what's going on. There were a couple of occasions when we could just about see something glinting on a table, waiting to be picked up, and we ended up sliding across the side of it and stabbing A as we couldn't pinpoint exactly where it was. Frustrating.

Similarly, given the darkness of the game, it's often difficult to see when a crow or zombie dog is charging towards you, and we died on several occasions because of this. Obviously, this isn't ideal.

And yet, despite these many flaws, we found ourselves miraculously hooked. Look past the deficiencies and this remains something that somehow still manages to grip and enthral. Even in this reduced form, the game still has atmosphere – perhaps it's the eerie music; being (mostly) alone in that most traditional of horror staples, the haunted house; or even the fact that the 'rotate and move' control system (believe us, it was a pain to go back to after *Resi 4*) engenders panic just because it's so unwieldy in the face of danger. Whatever the reason may be, if you can look past the age of



DOORS!

Yes, whenever you go through a door, you get the tedious animation of it opening. Thankfully, you can skip them with a touch of the A button, which is great. There's still a moment or two of black-screen loading, but it's far quicker than watching a door creaking open. Thank the lord!

DS REVIEW JAP

"A genuinely enjoyable experience"



△ With our H.P. Lovecraft library to hand, we can happily describe this thing as 'batrachian'. Yup.



△ Wesker. He's a bad man, and seems to be unaware of how extremely camp he looks.



TOUCH TOO MUCH

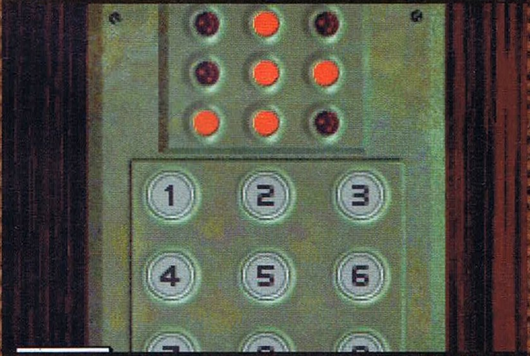
Some all-new touch-screen puzzles liven up the brain-eating and dog-shooting fun to be had in the rest of the game…



There's a blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment when you can try to revive the bloke outside the room with the enormo-snake. It's the only use of the microphone that we've found.



Just like the bit in Aliens with Bishop the android – sorry, synthetic person – you can use the stylus to stab between your fingers, but with the benefit of not cutting yourself.



This is a type of noughts and crosses puzzle, with added numbers. The touch-screen puzzles are great as they go, but there are vast swathes of game that don't feature any.

the game and all of its shortcomings, *Resident Evil: Deadly Silence* remains a genuinely enjoyable experience. Of course, you may remember all the puzzles, but reaching back through the fug of time, we actually enjoyed solving them.

As for the all-new DS scenes, these generally take the form of two types of gameplay: first-person zombie slashing and some modest touch-screen puzzling. The former instance is by far the most satisfying. On reaching some rooms or corridors, you'll get a first-person view with zombies, crows or dogs lurching towards you. Drawing the stylus across the touch screen allows you to slash at them, which does more damage and sometimes knocks them back, whereas tapping an enemy sees you stab them, which isn't as effective but allows you to get more blows in. It's debatable as to how much worth this gives the game, but it is fun and does offer a change of pace, even if the change of camera view also divorces it from the rest of the game.

"PERHAPS THE BIGGEST NEWS WITH DEADLY SILENCE IS THE NEW MULTIPLAYER MODE"

The puzzling is less impressive. For instance, there are a number of chests dotted around, and to open them, you'll need to manipulate clock hands to match colours.

Other tiny bits and pieces also make an appearance – you can use the microphone to try to revive your dying comrade outside the room with the giant snake in it, and you can use the touch screen to try to shake zombies off you if they get close enough to have a gnaw on your face.

Otherwise, things are rounded off by the top screen showing the map (which is admittedly handy – all the action is shown on the touch screen), while a few improvements



HARD MAN

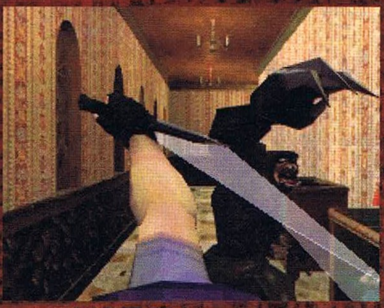
As always, you can play as either Chris Redfield or Jill Valentine. Jill remains the easier option, and we found the game far less stressful playing as her. Things are more difficult with Chris – check out the multiple dogs here. With Jill, we got two and a crow. And the crow still killed us.

RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE

The original Resi rises from the grave



△ It's literally the last thing you want to see when you enter the drawing room. Typical.



△ The dog still leaps through the window in this corridor. Sorry to spoil the surprise.



△ A sink, a bookcase, a blue triangular friend. What more could a girl want? Nothing.



△ Time a touch screen attack right and you'll knock the enemy back. Unlike here.



from the Gamecube *Resi* make it through, such as the ability to quick turn and quick reload, and to knife zombies via the L button.

Perhaps the biggest news with *Deadly Silence* is the multiplayer mode. It's multi-cart only, but there's both a competitive and a co-operative mode. The former features co-op zombie slaying and puzzle solving through a variety of levels in the mansion, while the latter is a simple race to rack up as many zombie kills as possible. Both types are simple but surprisingly fun, even if the other players (up to four) are represented by coloured icons rather than polygonal character models. Which is a bit rubbish. Still, it's a first for *Resi* nonetheless (if you disregard *Resident Evil Outbreak* on PS2, which offered online co-operative fun, even though it wasn't wireless), and it's a great addition.

All of which, multiplayer aside, adds up to a few tweaks, a couple of entertaining additions, and not much that actually transforms the raw substance of *Resident Evil* in the way that, say, *Resident Evil 4* did. Having said that, they're all welcome changes, and they certainly add to the experience of *Resident Evil* on DS.

While we've obviously got reservations about the exhumation of a decade-old game, the fact that *Resi* can still provide tension and enjoyment in equal measure is testament to its quality. Of course, if you never want to revisit the game that kicked off the survival horror boom ever again, this isn't one for you. Let's just hope we get something original next time, eh?

JES BICKHAM

SNAKES ALIVE!

The big snake is still in the game. but after seeing it in splendid Gamecube-o-vision, it's a little, well, quaint on DS (horribly primitive might be closer to the mark). Make sure you use the acid grenade rounds that Barry gives you if you want to see it off quick-sharp.

+

- Great atmosphere.
- Decent touch-screen bits.
- Wi-Fi multiplayer.

–

- It's ten years old.
- It's the same game as always.
- Crappy controls.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Resident Evil 4
Capcom
NGC/104 97%
Best game on Gamecube? Yep. And the best *Resi* ever.



7 VISUALS

Prettier than PSone and still atmospheric, but not dazzling.

6 SOUNDS

Great music and the most terrible voice acting you've heard.

7 MASTERY

Technically great, but not in the league as, say, *Mario Kart*.

7 LIFESPAN

A decent 10 hours of single-player at least, plus multiplayer too.

VERDICT

***Deadly Silence* manages to stay relevant through good design, creepy atmosphere and some neat DS-specific touches.**

NGC **79**

"A hyper-kinetic, super-powered mess"



△ **Win one of the bonus fights and Joe will strike quite the pose.**

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
DEVELOPER	CLOVER
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

Superhero Smash Bros? That's what Red Hot Rumble would like to be, but it hasn't quite got what it takes…

After the excellent, innovative touch-screen wonders of Joe's recent DS appearance, we were hoping for something equally special for our hero's third Gamecube outing. Sadly, *Red Hot Rumble* is something of a mess. A riotously colourful, hyper-kinetic, super-powered mess, admittedly, but a mess all the same. Just when we thought Joe could do no wrong, he's fumbled the ball. Which isn't to say that this is awful – far from it. Indeed, it can frantic and fun, but it's simply too chaotic to be able to play it properly.

Red Hot Rumble is essentially Capcom's stab at emulating *Smash Bros Melee*. Featuring our eponymous hero, his supporting cast (Captain Blue, Sylvia and the rest), plus a raft of brand new colourful additions to the character roster (including the disturbingly sexy Co-ordinator Sprocket), the story this time around is that Captain Blue is filming his own superhero movie. However, he can't decide on who'll get the main role in his magnum opus, so every wannabe star gets to duke it out on camera for the honour of being the next Tobey Maguire.

That's the setup for the game, and rather than *Viewtiful Joe* or its sequel's equal weighting of fisticuffs and fiendish puzzling, this is all about streamlined scrapping against an opponent over multi-levelled arenas. Just like – you guessed it – *Smash Bros*. However, in the single-player game at least, these fights aren't straight-up one-on-one bundles – there's always a goal to be achieved. It might be collecting a certain amount of coins, or destroying a boss-type character, or maybe kicking in as many faceless drones as you can, all the while trying to nobble your rival and prevent him from attaining the success that you're so desperately aiming for.

Each fight, such as it is, is presented as three scenes in Captain Blue's film, and they're linked as a themed sequence, loosely based around recognisable bits from Hollywood blockbusters (there's an Inca-themed battle, for instance, which has touches of *Indiana Jones*). Each of the three scenes offers a different objective (such as the aforementioned coin grabbing), meaning there's a pleasing wealth of variety. However, the actual fighting isn't quite the same as in previous Joes.



VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

Super-fast multiplayer mayhem



△ Each of the levels has a definite theme and is full of detail.







△ This button-matching mini-battle is dump.

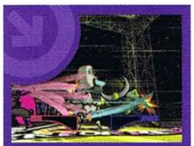
It's a lot shallower, for a start. Joe – or whichever character you choose – only has one basic and one special attack, and the super powers we're so familiar with (Slow, Zoom and Mach Speed) are notable by their absence. In fact, powers are randomly dropped from the sky and you have to pick them up to use them. What they do is similarly altered: Slow makes everyone else move like they're in treacle, while keeping you at normal speed, Mach Speed lets you zip anywhere around the screen in a blazing corona of fire, and Zoom blows you up to a massive size, with accordingly inflated attack and defence.

There's a single new power, too, called Sound Effects, a chargeable ability that unleashes an attack that varies for each character, from a tiny 'whiff!' to a massive 'THUD!' depending on how much you managed to charge it up.

What makes the pick-up system for the super powers successful is the mad scramble for them when they're dropped from the sky. But divorced from the brain-scrambling puzzling of the *Viewtiful Joe* games that we know and love, they merely become tools for hurting things. Nonetheless, in the confines of this button-stabbing basher, the new system works well enough.

Allied to the powers are other, more prosaic power-ups, such as speed-ups, health-giving hot dogs, and the admittedly inventive Stunt Double Doll, which conjures up a decoy facsimile of your character to draw opponents away from you.

There's plenty to add to the general mayhem of the game,



FIGHT!

Throw a Super VFX Orb at your enemy and you'll warp into a one-on-one bonus fight with your opponent. Some of these are quite fun, such as rallying a hapless drone between you, but others are almost insultingly tiresome exercises, with you just bashing buttons as quickly as possible.

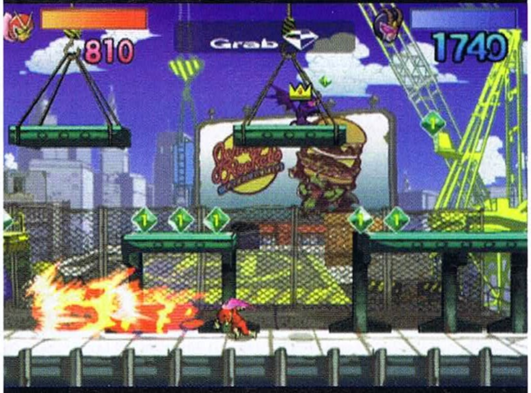


GO WITH THE JOE

Let's take a closer look at a typical Red Hot Rumble *fight and the items and powers that you can use…*



■ PUNCH You no longer have kicks and punches, just a normal attack, which is curiously bound to the B button. Unless you change it, of course. Which you can.

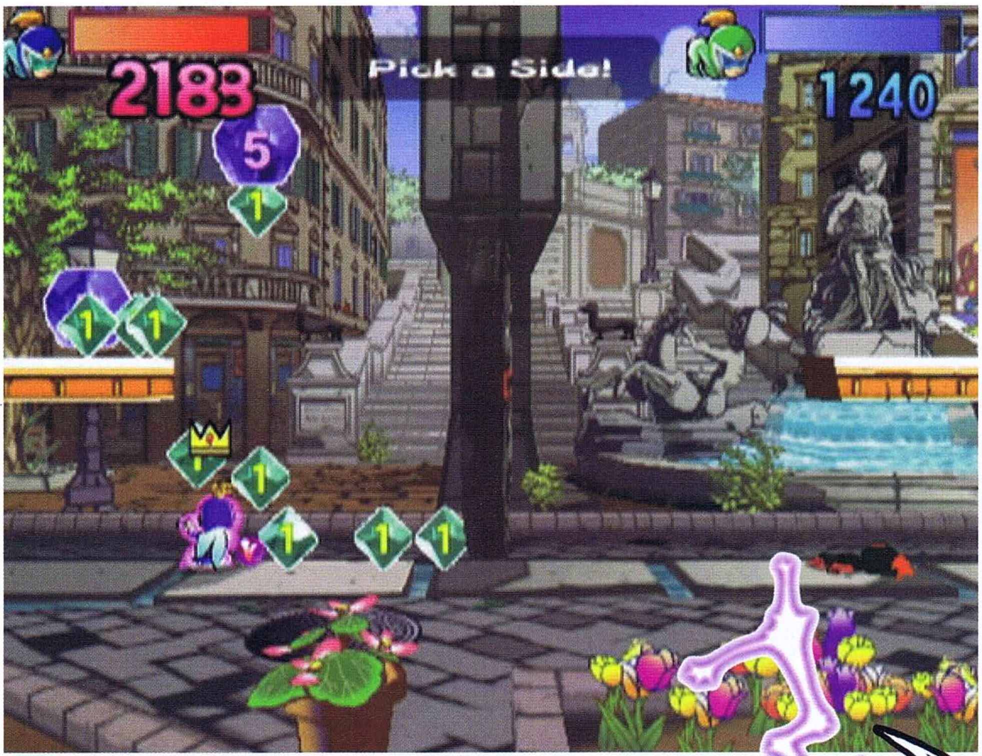


■ SPECIAL Each character also has a special attack, which has different effects when coupled with movement on the analogue stick. Joe gets a nice fiery punch, bless him.



■ POWERS They fall from the sky like some kind of power-bestowing rain. Our favourite is Slow, simply because it enables you to run rings around your opponents.

"The gaming equivalent of watching a strobe light"



△ Here you've got to collect the gems before your opponent.



△ This goon is about to get his block knocked off.







△ That's a pretty big pile of cash...





and mayhem is essentially what the game is all about. It's all just on the right side of mental in the single-player game, where not only are you dealing with a slap-happy opponent, but you also have power-ups raining down and objectives to complete. And *Viewtiful Joe*'s cartoon world is so colourful and retina frazzling that it gets pretty hard to follow the action. Nevertheless, despite these multiple distractions, it's possible to keep a bead on proceedings and succeed. However, in the multiplayer game, it's a different matter altogether.

With three or four players, the game gets almost unplayable. Seriously. Not because it slows down or there's anything fundamentally wrong with the design – it's just that the sheer amount of things going on makes it nigh-on impossible to track the action. Indeed, it's actually quite impressive that there's so much happening, but when you've got four happy scrappers, power-ups all over the shop, super powers being used willy-nilly and non-player character drones making an appearance, the human eye simply can't process the information needed for your hands to be able to react in the proper manner. And that's quite beside the fact that your hands can't move fast enough to deal with everything that's going on anyway. At times it's like the gaming equivalent of watching a strobe light for five minutes.

"THE HUMAN EYE SIMPLY CAN'T PROCESS THE INFORMATION NEEDED FOR YOU TO REACT"

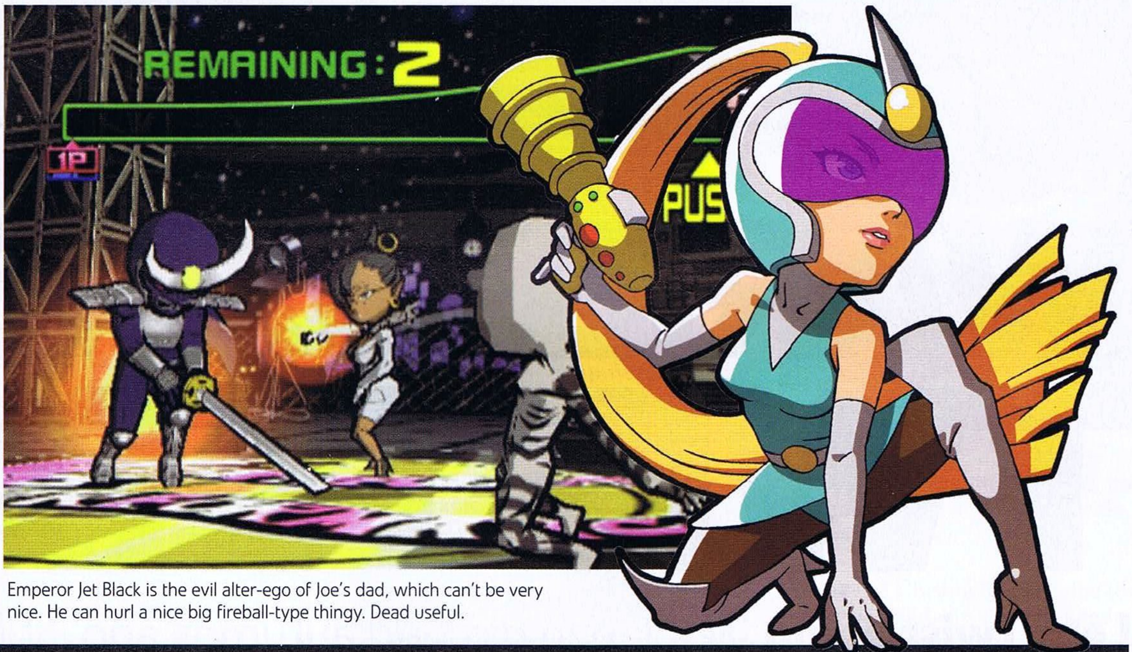
Simply put, *Smash Bros* does this kind of thing so much better. For instance, take the simple matter of the screen scaling in and out – that doesn't happen here. The screen stays at a static size, meaning that when everyone is grouped together, it's absurdly difficult to see what's going on. In *Smash Bros*, you'd get a nice close-up of the action. Here, your eyes will

HEROES FOR HIRE
Well, you don't actually hire them. But here they are anyway…


Joe is the main character and all-rounder. He's much as you remember him, despite the changes to his powers.



Captain Blue Jr. is very annoying to fight against, thanks to his magic yo-yo that knocks you back when it connects. He's a right git.



Emperor Jet Black is the evil alter-ego of Joe's dad, which can't be very nice. He can hurl a nice big fireball-type thingy. Dead useful.

bleed and your brain will start to spasm – guaranteed.

All of which is a terrible shame because it's easy to see that this could have been a serious (well, colourful and silly) successor to *Smash Bros* in the multiplayer beat-'em-up stakes. When played one-on-one, the multiplayer is passably entertaining and a pleasant way to hammer a friend. Unfortunately, *Red Hot Rumble* simply doesn't have the depth that *Smash Bros* does. The characters here have their own moves, sure, but they pale in comparison to the selection available to Ninty's mascots.

Similarly, the power-ups here are dwarfed by the insane amount in *Smash Bros*, and the simple fact of the matter is that despite the pleasing variety of the battles, there's just much more to do in Nintendo's grand über-scrapper. Get two experienced *Smash Bros* players together and you'll be treated to an almost balletic display of combat. Here you're simply leaping around like a mad thing, frantically stabbing buttons and trying to keep up with the action, rather than keeping control of it.

Red Hot Rumble is something of a disappointment then. It's a brave move for Capcom to do something a little different with their latest superstar, and wholeheartedly embracing multiplayer gaming is a great move. It's certainly something we've been waiting for since the first *Viewtiful Joe* exploded out of nowhere and dropped the jaws of gamers worldwide.

This isn't a clever game, though. Much has been made of the teeth-gnashingly difficult levels of the two 'proper' *Viewtiful Joe* games, but hand in hand with that was the brilliance of the puzzling and the wildly imaginative application of Joe's super powers. What we have here is a straightforward button-bashing beat-'em-up that feels incredibly thin in comparison.

But don't get us wrong – despite its flaws, this can be lots of fun. In short bursts, it's exactly the kind of laugh-out-loud enjoyment that we've come to expect from Gamecube's best games, but in the long term, its shallowness and the confusing avalanche of action and items mean it's ultimately unsatisfying.

It's a brave experiment though, and we're fascinated to see where Joe is going to go next. Just imagine the possibilities on Revolution…

JES BICKHAM



PRACTICE!
Normally we'd say that the best way of learning how to play a game is by, well, playing it, but it's well worth going through Red Hot Rumble's Rehearsal mode because it actually helps a huge amount in preparing you for dealing with the eye-melting action on offer. And it's surprisingly good fun to play through, too.

+
- Super smooth.
- Colourful and imaginative.
- Great variety.

–
- Too confusing for its own good.
- Shallow and too unsatisfying in the long term.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Suer Smash Bros Melee
Nintendo
NGC/68 91%
Astonishing four-way fisticuffs with all of your favourite Nintendo characters.



8 VISUALS
That wonderful cartoony style we all know and love.

8 SOUNDS
As frantic and packed full of drama as the actual game itself.

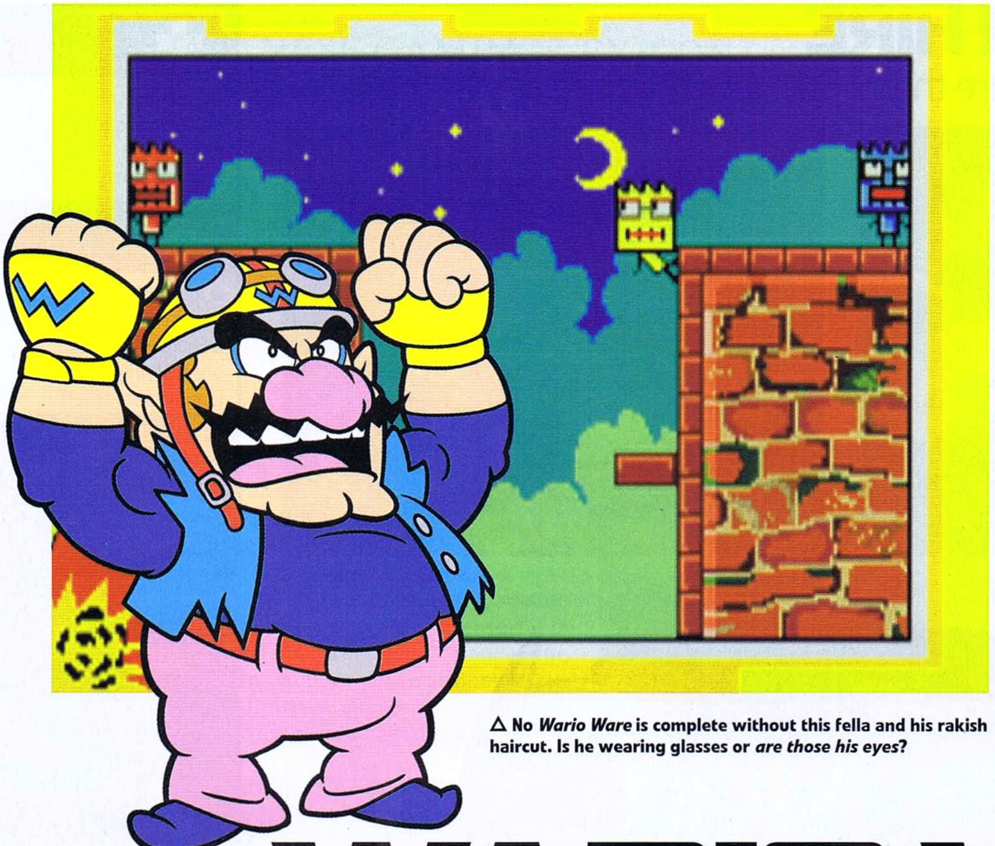
8 MASTERY
This game pushes an unbelievable amount of things around.

7 LIFESPAN
Meaty single-player and multiplayer options, but you'll soon tire of it.

VERDICT
***Red Hot Rumble* is a simple, imaginative brawler with charm to spare, but it's just too frenetic for its own good.**

NGC 61

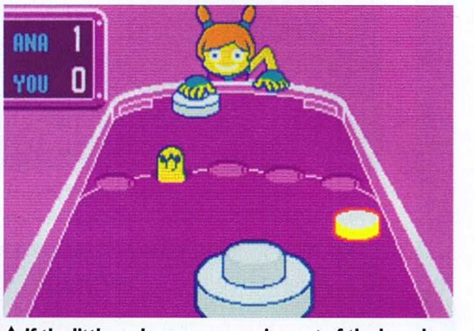
"It's funny because it works"



△ No *Wario Ware* is complete without this fella and his rakish haircut. Is he wearing glasses or *are those his eyes*?



△ Wario-chucking cannon madness is just the thing to make you wonder what the hell is in Nintendo's coffee.

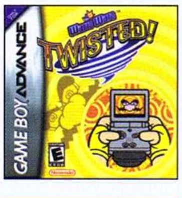


△ If the little mole-worms popping out of the board don't finish your brain off, Ana's smile certainly will.

WARIO WARE TWISTED!

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	NINTENDO
OUT	24TH FEBRUARY
PLAYERS	1-2
SAVE	NONE
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
COST	£30



Let's twist again, like Japan did two autumns ago. Still, better late than never, especially when it's this good…

Like the Chocolate Strawberry Creams in a box of Quality Street, Nintendo leaves you with a bitter aftertaste, but you can't help but keep coming back. If we had any resolve whatsoever, we'd stubbornly and righteously boycott *Wario Ware Twisted!* for Nintendo lazily bringing it to these shores 15 months – 15 months! – after Japan. But, of course, it's such a brilliantly barmy barnstormer of a game that we're alrady in love with The Big N all over again. Grrr!

The opening screen warns you to twist the GBA to play, rather than your whole body. Is this a joke? We hope not, because it sets the scene perfectly for another bewilderingly mad microgame mash-up. This instalment is *Twisted* – literally, of course. A spinny gyrosensor inside the cart senses when you tilt the GBA (or SP, or DS) left or right, so the mini-games are mostly about spinning things or moving them around. And like all *Wario Wares*, it only takes a few minutes of three-seconds-at-a-time insanity to laugh like a chimp on a seesaw, by which point, you're hooked.

Banish all those painful memories of *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation* – the spinny magic in *Wario Ware Twisted!* works brilliantly well. There's a sort-of rumbling clicky physical feedback that accompanies every twist, so you can actually feel each degree of turnitude. That takes the randomness out of trying to find the exact angle to pot a golf ball into a hole, or swing Wario away from a crocodile's mouth. And even the slightest twitch is detected – the mini-game where you keep eggs intact by holding totally still is tough work.

The game sometimes asks a bit much, such as spinning a full 180-degrees to shake a man's hat off, but it's easy to forgive when you've got brilliant games like *Circular Super Mario Bros* (*Super Mario Bros* in a circle!) and *The One Where You Wake The Cat Up*. And these aren't just silly ideas with tilty-twisty play grafted on. Somehow, the hilarious bizarreness is always the perfect partner for the tilt techniques. Whether you're swinging the GBA to stomp on little men, feeding cars through cheese graters and flipping ice blocks away with 'jazz hands', it's funny because it works.



FULLY TRAINED

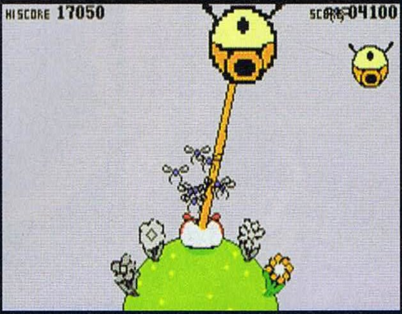
So, here's our one problem with Wario Ware:* unskippable cut scenes.** ***'Course, you can dodge past them after you've seen them once – but for such a fast-paced game, the early stages are horribly slow-going thanks to Nintendo's insistence on showing you just how funny they are. Needs fixing. Now.

TWIST OF FUN

Considering that Hudson have only had five good ideas for Mario Party minigames since 1999, it's amazing how the Wario Ware team can squirt over 200 brilliant games out of their brains every time. 'Props'.



■ CRAZY GOLF A neat little game in its own right: Nintendo should sell *Wario Ware's* best minigames as Revolution downloads. Hear that Ninty? We want a share of the profits!



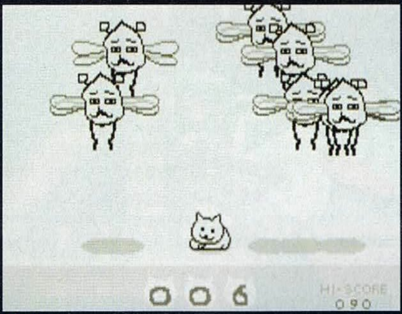
■ PYORO Impale enemies on a bird's tongue, then wiggle the Game Boy to force air up its gut hole until it explodes like a piñata. Satisfyingly sadistic fun.



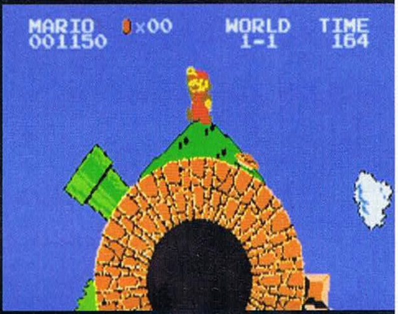
■ BAT BELT Simple: spin to get the direction right, then whack the ball harder than Wario would slam Mario's head in a door if he got half a chance.



■ WARIOBIKE Wario first took up motorcycling in *Wario Land 4*, and he's never looked back. Especially when there are money bags directly in front of him.



■ BUZZ OFF You get the idea: sweet-faced furr-kitten is good; moustachioed onion-mosquitoes are bad. Wait – are those blobs between their legs supposed to be…



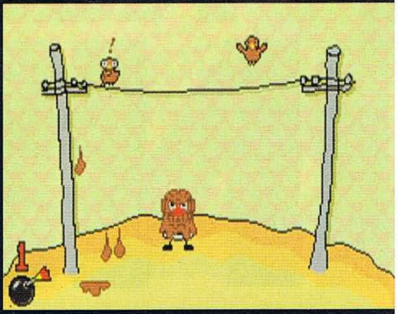
■ MUSHROOM RINGDOM There are some gaming moments that make you shake the arm of the nearest person and say, "Look at this!" in a squeaky voice. This is one.



■ MAKE A STAND Play your part in a Mexican wave. *Looks* easy, right? You should see it when the speedometer ramps up. One of the few button-pressing games.



■ CROCODILE TEARS Self-explanatory, this one. It's tough work getting the timing right – but we can't say we're displeased when Wario gets a croc maw right in the face.



■ DROPPINGS IN The Japanese do love their poo jokes. But Wario's pretty good at that 1970s sitcom look of barely-controlled comedy rage.

And the extras? Genius. After every batch of games and its corresponding 'boss' game, you get something sweet and fun out of a ball machine. Could be a Space Boomerang. Could be a mini drum kit. Could even be a complete mini-game like *Excitebike* ripoff *Wariobike*. There are 142 in all, and while we wouldn't have minded a method of unlocking them faster than playing entire groups of micro-games over and over again, it makes *Twisted!* a hell of a package.

So, is it better than *Wario Ware Touched!*? Yep. Better than the original *Wario Ware*? Yeeeaaa… no. Brilliant? You bet. And if you really want to follow the game's nutcase spirit, slot it into a Game Boy Player and play it by twisting your Gamecube around. Waaaaah!

MARK GREEN

> **"THE HILARIOUS BIZARRENESS IS THE PERFECT PARTNER FOR THE TILT TECHNIQUES"**



△ More proof for our theory that a sinister global world order is insisting on first-person shooting sections in every videogame.

+

- Mad, addictive and fun mini-games.
- Twisting works well.
- Brilliant bonuses.

–

- Slightly tortuous method for unlocking the bonuses.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Wario Ware Touched
Nintendo
NGC/103 5/5
Wario's DS masterpiece. A little easy, perhaps, but it's super-good fun with a capital F.



9 VISUALS
Simplistic, but that's the point. It's got artistic flair in spades.

7 SOUNDS
Learn to love the between-game music: you'll hear it a lot.

8 MASTERY
Exploits the twisty-turny idea, brilliantly, over 200 times.

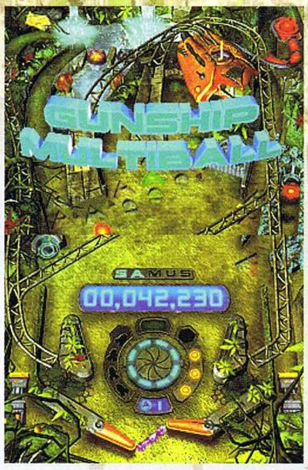
8 LIFESPAN
Unlocking those bally bonuses is an incredibly addictive business.

VERDICT

Twistier than helter-skelter pasta, funnier than a man falling over, cleverer than Stephen Hawking on Red Bull.

NGC 87

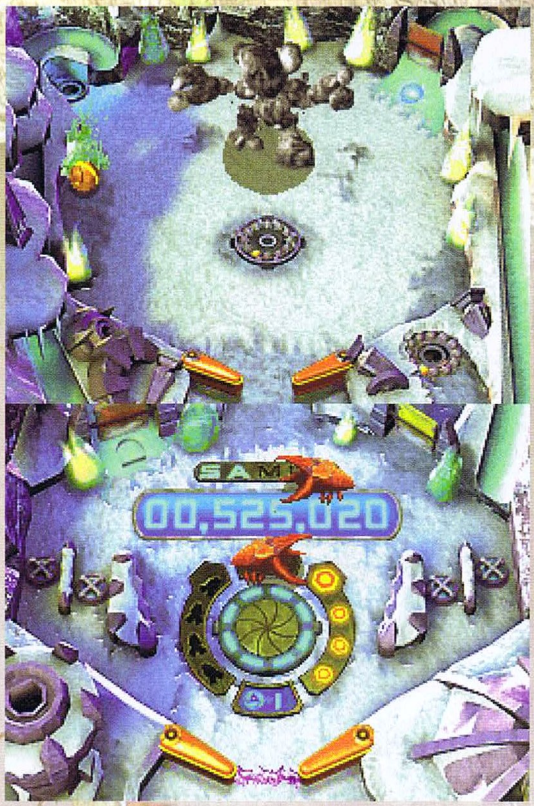
"A cracking slice of ball flipping"



△ Lock three balls in the gunship and you'll get some multiball fun.



△ The Force Field is handy as it stops the ball falling through the flippers.



△ You can see the Force Field at the bottom of the screen here.



METROID PRIME PINBALL

The belle of the ball! Samus shrinks herself down and jacks in the exploring in favour of some top-notch flipper-based fun…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	FUSE
RELEASE DATE	MARCH
PLAYERS	1-8
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	YES
WI-FI	YES
MIC	NO
COST	£30



Someone, somewhere, has been jolly generous indeed. After 2004's dispiriting *Super Mario Ball*, who'd have thought that developer Fuse Games would have been given a second crack of the pinball whip? Whoever sits in Nintendo's Big Decision-Making Office must have a soft spot for the outfit, as Fuse moved straight from its first effort to developing *Metroid Prime Pinball*, in what can only be a big-hearted case of "have another go, and make it better this time".

And that's exactly what Fuse has done – *Metroid Prime Pinball* is both a cracking slice of ball flipping and also a magnificent evocation of the *Metroid Prime* games. It's a genuinely pleasant surprise and an absolutely massive step up from the team's first effort.

Naturally, as with all pinball games, the aim is to rack up an enormous high score measuring in the millions. To do this, however, you have to collect 12 artifacts, whereupon you'll gain access to the Artifact Temple. Get beyond that and there's a final, extra-tricky challenge for you to take on.

Excluding the Artifact Temple and the final course, there are four tables to play. Tallon Overworld and the Pirate Frigate are the two main tables, and meeting certain criteria during the Multi Mission mode allows you to move between these and the two extra tables, Phendrana Drifts and the Phazon Mines, both of which feature bosses to destroy. These are in the form of Thardus and the Omega Pirate (remember them? Both were super-hard bosses in the sky-scrapingly brilliant *Metroid Prime*).

The dual screens of the DS are used brilliantly, representing the tables in their entirety, unlike our favourite pinball games of the past, such as *Pokémon Pinball*. The 'dead space' between the screens is even used, allowing you to judge ball movement, although this also means that there are times when you can't see the ball at all.

The touch screen is perhaps less impressively employed, although it makes a modest innovation in



READY TO RUMBLE

Metroid Prime Pinball ***comes with its own rumble pak, which you slot into the GBA port on your DS. It works well enough, although it chirrups and chirps in a most disconcerting manner, making it a little too gimmicky for our taste.***

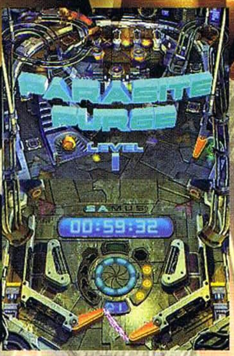
TALLON

The Tallon Overworld table is by far the easiest of the two main tables (the other being the Pirate Frigate). On our second go, we racked up almost 2.5 million points and managed to see everything except the Artifact Temple. It's a great table, though, sporting Samus's ship, weather effects and an atmosphere that mirrors the same area in Metroid Prime.









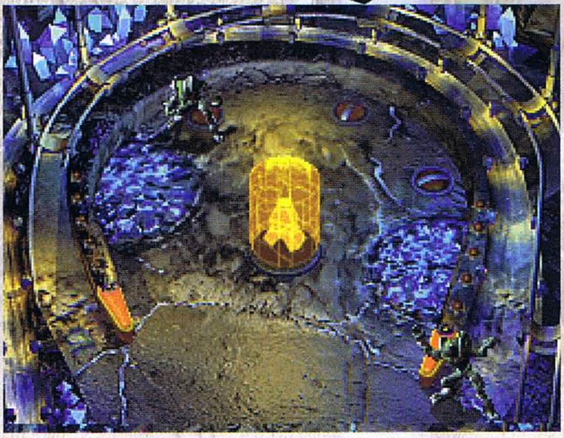
△ Nasty parasites. Kill 'em.



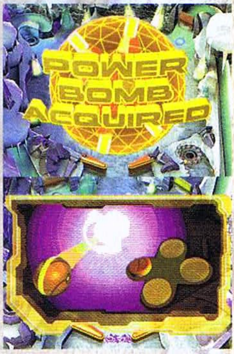
△ Pirate Frigate is hard.



△ Once you've collected 12 artifacts, you can enter the Artifact Temple and face the penultimate boss. It's not easy. Nope.



△ The thing in the middle is a missile upgrade. You'll have to break the containment field before you can grab it, though.



△ The Power Bomb is a one-use-only power-up.

allowing you to tilt the tables by rubbing it. It's inconvenient to move your fingers away from the D-Pad to do so, but it's a great little touch all the same, and can save you from annoying ball-loss off the bottom of the screen.

> **"WELL-DESIGNED TABLES, SUPERB PHYSICS AND AN ADDICTIVE PERSONALITY"**

The actual gameplay is even more impressive. Unlike *Super Mario Ball*, this actually works as a pinball game, with well-designed tables, superb physics and a wholly addictive personality. However, it's the way in which the game has been melded so brilliantly with the *Metroid* universe that makes it so much more than just a confident pinball title.

For a start, it looks incredible, emulating the art style of the Gamecube *Metroids* wonderfully, complete with smart animation and cracking special effects. But the essence of *Metroid* is infused with the gameplay – hit the Mode Saucer and if you aren't given the option to move to a different table, you'll enter one of several enemy-bashing mini-games. Most of these involve Samus bumping and bombing enemies on the board in her morph ball form, but others – once Combat mode is activated – see our heroine stand and shoot at advancing hordes of Shriekbats and Beetles. There's a wide variety of *Prime*-based baddies for you to blow apart, including Space Pirates, Triclops, Burrowers and the eponymous Metroids. There's also

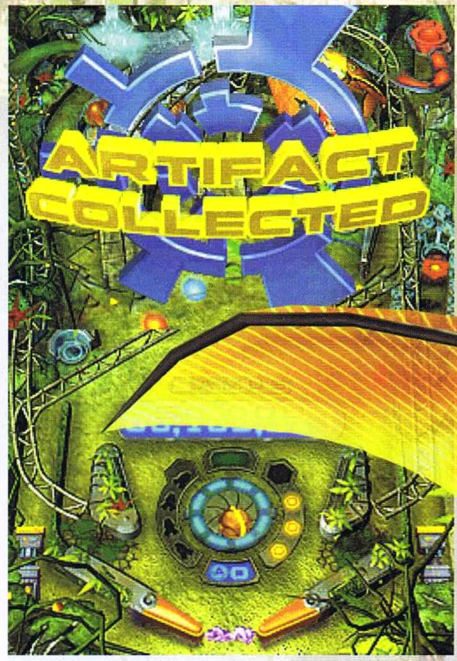


FRIEND FLIPPING

Rather splendidly, the game offers eight-player single-card download play, which basically allows you to release Metroids onto your opponents' screens. It's not quite multiplayer Mario Kart, but it's a nice extra nonetheless.



"Hugely atmospheric and supremely playable"



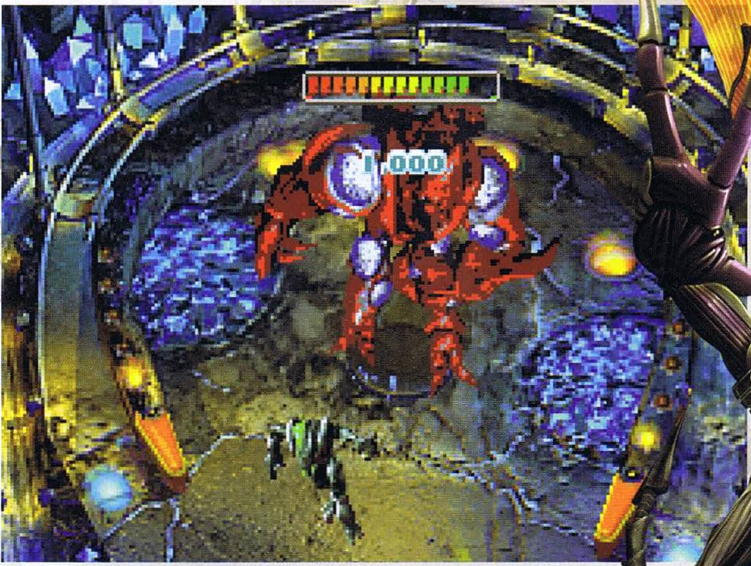
△ You can rack up a huge score on Tallon Overworld.





△ In Combat mode, Samus will stand up and shoot with her handy gun arm. You can't move her but you can aim, which is always jolly helpful.





△ The Omega Pirate can be annoying, but a few well-placed missiles in Combat mode will soon bottle his vinegar. Or maybe kill him.



△ The Wall Jump mini-level holds an artifact too.



an off-table minigame that sees you wall-jumping towards an artifact, using the DS's L and R buttons.

The tables themselves are similarly *Metroid*-esque, rammed with scenery from the games and never missing an opportunity to reference the *Prime* worlds, be it via Phazon multiballs, the use of weapons such as missiles and Power Bombs to help kill enemies, or even through the superb music. In short, it's hugely atmospheric and supremely playable.

And yet we can't help but feel there should have been more to it. *Metroid Prime Pinball*'s tables are excellent, and there's plenty to do on them, but in an hour's play you'll have seen all four of the main tables. The game persists in getting you to try to beat your high scores (it's genuinely addictive), the just-one-more-go factor is palpable, and the option to beat your high scores

> **"THERE'S A WIDE VARIETY OF PRIME-BASED BADDIES FOR YOU TO BLOW APART"**

TWO BOSS TABLES

Bosses in a pinball game? Madness, we tell you!

PHAZON MINES
This bonus table features the Omega Pirate from *Metroid Prime*. You'll simply need to bump into him, or bomb him, to whittle down his health, although if you get the missiles and activate Combat mode, you can shower him with hot rocket death. Otherwise, watch out for the irritating Space Pirates that leap around with homing missiles. We don't like them much.

PHENDRANA DRIFTS
Based on the gorgeous level of the same name, this winter wonderland sports rock-beast Thardus as its boss. You can't harm him when he's curled up and rolling around, and getting to his area of the screen is often tricky because of the narrow opening between the uppermost set of flippers. Also, the annoying Triclops help him out, so use those bombs wisely, eh?





on a single table offers a distinct challenge compared to the Multi Mission mode. However, in the long term, the game really succeeds as an occasional diversion rather than a day-wasting obsession. After a marathon artifact-collecting session, it's difficult to work up the enthusiasm to start from scratch again, and the game simply doesn't have the legs to sustain itself for long periods – unlike, say, *Advance Wars Dual Strike* or the day-devouring wonder game that is *Mario Kart DS*.

It'd be fair to say that *Metroid Prime Pinball* is small but perfectly formed, and it shows that the Fuse Games team has repaid Nintendo's confidence in them tenfold. If you're a pinball fanatic, you'll find plenty to love here, and even those of you that have so far been unswayed by this genre's peculiar charms will find plenty to satisfy. If only it offered more in the way of long-term satisfaction it'd have garnered a higher score, but as it is, this is perfect bite-sized entertainment for the occasional train journey or afternoon break.

We await with anticipation whatever Fuse is up to next, and if this gets a sequel, it's a fair bet to say that it'll fulfil the spectacular promise on offer here. Consider our fingers well and truly crossed, and let's hope that *Metroid Prime Hunters* is even better…

JES BICKHAM



TRICLOPS TERROR
By far the most annoying enemies in the game are the Triclops. They'll pick you up and try to spit you off-screen between your flippers. They're very irritating, especially if you've already exhausted your supply of bombs.



△ Here's Samus firing, yesterday.

+
- Excellent pinball.
- It really is *Metroid*.
- Looks great.

–
- Built for short-term play rather than long-term satisfaction.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Metroid Prime
Nintendo
NGC/76 97%
If you've never played this landmark title, BUY IT NOW! But, er, it's not pinball.



8 VISUALS
Lovely – pin-sharp, detailed and full of that *Metroid* flavour.

8 SOUNDS
Great effects and some recognisable *Metroid* tunes.

8 MASTERY
Super smooth and makes fine use of the capabilities of the DS.

6 LIFESPAN
It's not exactly *Advance Wars*, but it's perfect for an hour of pinball fun.

VERDICT
This is streets ahead of *Super Mario Ball* and it's without doubt the best pinball game we've played in years.

NGC 82

"Bulbous-headed cuddle mutt"



△ The thrill of tree shopping, captured for all time on GBA. Hurrah.



△ Play this doggy diggy game and you'll unlock some big cash prizes.



△ There's something very sinister about this.



△ Oh, it's cute alright. But $30 cute? No.



△ So you thought dogs liked to fetch sticks on the beach? Nah – they just sit down and weep.

+

- Dogs with big heads are funny.
- Some of the mini-games aren't bad.

–

- Almost nothing to do.
- Awful 'animation'.
- About 0.4% as cute as *Nintendogs*

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Pokémon Emerald
Nintendo
NGC/112 4/5
Even if you have to put up with ugly gits like Mr Mime.



3 VISUALS
If it wasn't for the cute pictures of dogs in cups, it'd be a 1.

2 SOUNDS
Change the background music and your dog will 'heart' you.

2 MASTERY
We've seen the GBA do better with the batteries taken out.

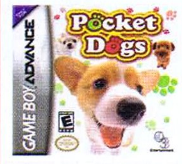
3 LIFESPAN
Seen one picture of a massive-bonced dog, seen 'em all.

VERDICT
Almost as much fun as taking your beloved pet to the vet to have it put down. Even *Dogz* is better.

NGC 26

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	O3
DEVELOPER	AGATSUMA ENTERTAINMENT
OUT	NOW (JAP/US)
PLAYERS	1
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	NO
COST	$30 (£17)



POCKET DOGS

Fat-headed hounds that should be put down.

It says here that Mr Yoneo Morita, the Japanese photographer who invented the *hanadeka* ("big nose") technique of photographing animals, had to actually move out of his house because he'd crammed it so full of cats and dogs. Sure, sure. That'll explain why the virtual pet sim based on his fat-faced puppy snaps barely evokes the joy of owning one dog, let alone a houseful.

We've rarely seen a game with so little going on. *Nintendogs* let you stroke, wash, tickle, command, walk and annoy your pup. By comparison, ask us to draw up a list of ten things you can do in *Pocket Dogs*, and we wouldn't get far before we'd have to put "switching the game on and off" in there. You can 'talk' to your dog (choose from one of six faces that represent your mood); throw a ball; decorate the house; and that's it. Your reward? Unlocking different 'poses' of the bulbous-headed cuddle mutt you chose from the eight available at the start. Thrilling.

Otherwise, it's all about staring at your dog. And what a dog. Rather than animation, *Pocket Dogs* has the kind of amateur shape-fiddling you'd expect to see on an internet Flash animation. Static images of your fuzzy wonder wobble and distort like a jelly on a train in order to represent 'movement'. The dogs can't even walk – the game simply fades out to a pawprint-filled cutscene when Boatface (or whatever you call yours) moves between rooms.

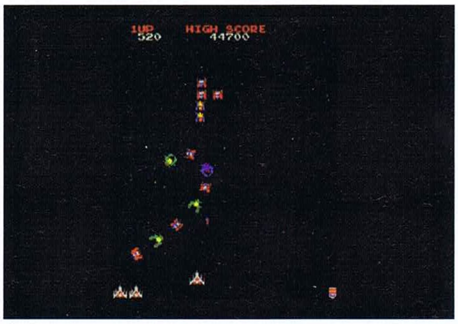
"WE'VE RARELY SEEN A GAME WITH SO LITTLE GOING ON"

We did get some value out of the hilarious dog pictures – the bug-eyed pug's confused face is a real giggle, as is 'dog in a cup'. But there's the feeling that you're supposed to focus on the eight or so mini-games here. That's bad, because fun as the fluffy versions of *Zoo Keeper* and That Tile-Sliding Christmas Cracker Puzzle are, they clearly don't add up to a $30 game. So, still no decent GBA rival for *Nintendogs*. Imagine the money a developer could make from those 70 million Game Boy Advancers jealous of their DS-owning buddies. Mr Yoneo Morita could fill another house with the profits.

MARK GREEN


Turn
world upside down
Rub
insane robots
Blow
rivals away
Touch
rampaging bulls
Jammed with 35 mini-games
It's one truly bizarre mission after the next in 'The Rub Rabbits!' the insanely addictive game that's turning the DS on its head. With 35 maddening mini-games, from slapping your friends to keep them awake, to shooting your rivals out of the sky, and from snowball fights, to games of twister, the list just gets longer and weirder.
Play it upside down, play it sideways, play it on your own, play it with friends, just play it.
The Rub Rabbits!™
7+
www.pegi.info
NINTENDO DS™
THE INSANITY STARTS FEB 10th
SONIC TEAM™
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SEGA, the SEGA logo and The Rub Rabbits! are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA Corporation. © SEGA Corporation, 2005. All rights reserved. The Nintendo DS logo is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2005 Nintendo.

"There are some nice little surprises in here"



△ The original *Galaga*. Play it until you unlock *'88*.



△ *Sky Kid* is a cheeky little side-scrolling shooter.





△ A simple menu screen, and a terrible framerate.



△ *Pole Position* is an absolute nightmare to control.

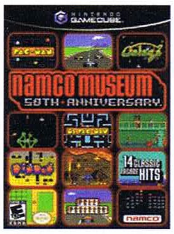
△ In space, no one cares if you're having any fun.

NAMCO MUSEUM

Crusty old videogames, mummified for your pleasure...

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	NAMCO
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£30



We haven't exactly been blessed with retro collections, with only *Midway Arcade Treasures* and a load of old Sonics to keep those memories alive. And then there's the *Atari Retro Collection* on DS – but we don't like to talk about that any more.

So, *Namco Museum* then. Actually, it's not that bad a collection. Yeah, you've got your usual ratio of dump-to-fairly-decent games in here. These range from the super-dull free-roaming shooter *Bosconian* and basic, *RC Pro-Am*-alike *Rally X*, to the real stars of the package, *Rolling Thunder*, *Pac-Man* and *Galaga*.

It's nice and cleanly presented too. The opening menu screen has a scrolling carousel of arcade cabs, all to the sound of 80s classics for that completely-unlike-any-arcade-we've-ever-been-in atmosphere. It's simple and it does the job, though, and we suppose it's better than just the dull and uninspired menu-selection system favoured by most collections like this.

> **"WHILE CLASSICS, GAMES LIKE GALAXIAN AND XEVIOUS FEEL TOO STILTED AND, WELL, OLD"**

Which just leaves you with the games – and as we said, it's a bit of a mixed bag. Some of the titles on here are still very enjoyable. Monster inflate-em-up *Dig Dug*, while looking totally rubbish, is still fairly compelling, *Galaga* is just as tough engaging and tactical as it ever was and *Pac-Man* is, well, *Pac-Man*. Again. There are some nice little surprises in here too. *Dragon Spirit*, a game we admit we'd never actually heard of let alone played is a fairly accomplished (by the standards of the titles on offer here) little vertically scrolling dinosaur-themed shooter, and it's one the games we found ourselves playing the most.

Unfortunately, there are a couple of disappointments here as well. *Pole Position 1* and *2*, both games that we remember fondly – and

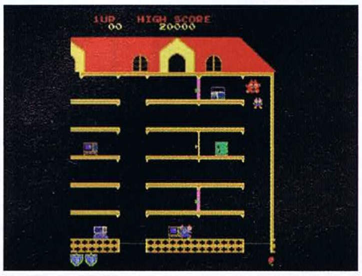


EXTRAS?

We have to admit that we're a bit miffed at the overall lack of extras. It amazes us that these compilations never have much in the way of game histories, world record scores or maybe interviews with developers. **Taito Legends** ***is one compilation that did this very well – it's just a shame more games haven't followed its lead.***

STARS OF THE ARCADE

Shoot, race and inflate monsters in this pick of the bundle



■ MAPPY
Run, collect, bounce on trampolines and walk through doors – before getting blocked in and killed over and over again by the merciless enemies. Fun for all of 30 seconds, unless you decide to get a bit good at it. Genuinely the stuff of nightmares.



■ DRAGON SPIRIT
Like a dragon-themed *Xevious*, you scroll up the screen endlessly, taking down dinosaurs, dragons and birds, both in the air and on land. It actually looks okay, and it's a fairly decent shooter. It's a lot easier to stomach than *Xevious* anyway.



■ GALAGA 88
Galaga's pretty decent, but you only need to play it for a while before you unlock this little beauty – a rearranged version of the classic, with prettier graphics, different attack waves and bonus stages. Very addictive, and undoubtedly the best game here.



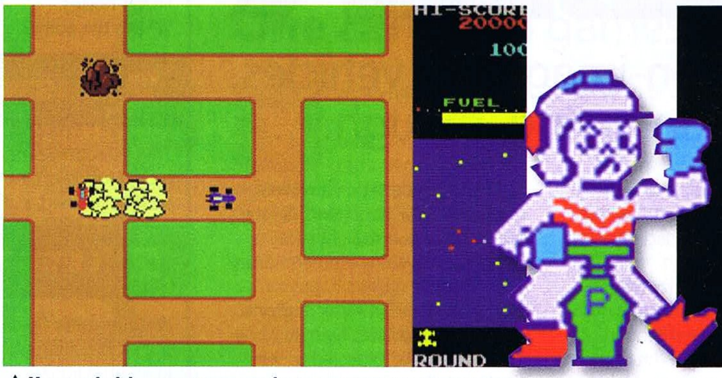
■ DIG DUG
Yup, it looks rubbish, but it's still a cheeky little game that sees you digging around in the mud, avoiding rocks and inflating the roaming enemies with a bicycle pump. It's like the game Taito never brought you, which is a pretty decent recommendation.



■ POLE POSITION I & 2
Remember these being any good? So did we until we played these death simulators. You could spend an entire day seeing if you can take three consecutive corners without bursting into a ball of flame. Or you could punch yourself repeatedly in the face.



■ ROLLING THUNDER
Walk around and shoot a never-ending stream of neon-spandexed ninjas. Enter doors to get more bullets, vault onto balconies and, well, keep shooting. It hasn't aged particularly well, but it's still a mean test of your reflexes. Best played after a double espresso.



△ **You can belch out creamy smoke to scupper your opponents.**

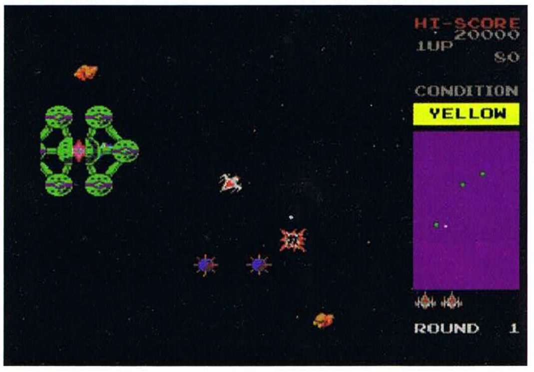


the ones we went to play first – are something of a mess in this collection. Without the benefit of a wheel, they're rendered virtually unplayable, unless you're willing to put in three months worth of practice getting your brain used to the analogue controls.

Meanwhile, games like *Galaxian* and *Xevious*, although bona fide classics, feel too stilted and, well, old to get more than a few minutes of enjoyment from them. *Pac-Man* isn't without issue either, as we'd swear blind that the speed of the game isn't quite right, with the yellow muncher seemingly faster than we ever before. Sure, it's still perfectly playable, but it's still one in the eye for authenticity.

Still, you can't argue with the amount of entertainment on offer here – even if it is just for a nostalgia trip. And should you be willing in to put in the time (oooh, all of 15 minutes) to get over 40,000 points in the original *Galaga*, you'll get the fantastic *Galaga 88* to play, which for us made the game just about worth it on its own. Just.

GERAINT EVANS



△ ***Bosconian*** **is a sort of free-roaming shooter. You need to take out these green bases by blowing up their pods. Tough work.**

+

■ *Galaga 88*
■ 16 games…

–

■ …some of which are rubbish.
■ Nothing in the way of extras.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Midway Arcade Treasures
US Import
Not Reviewed
A similar and actually slightly more enjoyable retro collection.



4 VISUALS
Well they are retro games. What did you expect?

4 SOUNDS
Bleep, Blork, Whirr, Tsk, Tsk, Wakka Wakka, Wong.

6 MASTERY
Mostly faithful conversions, so we can't complain.

7 LIFESPAN
16 games, which should satisfy most retro needs.

VERDICT
You can't argue with the selection of games on offer here, with some genuinely enjoyable classics and real gems.

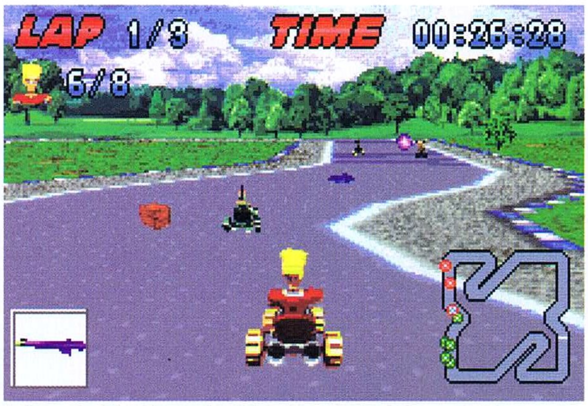
NGC 70



"Ringa-dinga-linga-rubbish"



▲ That's one of the GBA racers on the left, exhibiting real AI prowess.



▲ Crazy, isn't it? Licensed rubbish like this should be made illegal.



▲ Having finished first, this pathetic image is just the kind of reward we were hoping for.



▲ Thought The Annoying Thing was funny? Wait until you meet Punk Girl! She sits near-motionless in a kart.



CRAZY FROG RACER

Now he's riding non-imaginary vehicles. Still just as bloody annoying, though….

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	UBISOFT
DEVELOPER	INDEPENDENT ARTS
OUT	NOW
PLAYERS	1
SAVE	ON-CART
SINGLE-CART LINK	NO
COST	£20



Here we are: 2006, human genome cracked, internet uniting the planet, and naked frogs riding invisible motorbikes are the hottest thing since hot cakes. Who can begrudge Ubisoft for clambering on board the profits train of a thing so annoyingly popular that it's actually called The Annoying Thing?

Well, we can. Because this is an insipidly, insultingly generic *Mario Kart* wannabe that left us feeling in need of a good shower. Is the Crazy Frog's character truly captured in a game where power-up boxes are static wooden crates that simply disappear when you run over them? Is it really 'crazy' to race around a flat tarmac circuit with a generic countryside backdrop? This is lazy, lazy stuff.

"AN INSIPID, INSULTING MARIO KART WANNABE THAT LEFT US IN NEED OF A GOOD SHOWER"

Everything from *Crazy Frog Racer*'s title screen to the end-of-cup congratulations ("You successfully completed the bronze cup. Your rank: 1") has all the personality of an income tax form. Also, there's no 'handling' to speak of – you might as well be driving a cardboard box while your GBA-controlled competitors hug every corner at impossible speeds. Two of the four race types involve driving through 'checkpoints' that are just large, white, fuzzy circles 'painted' on the track; one of the others is a Battle mode set on a normal track with your opponents driving around like it's a straight race.

We can't even recommend *Crazy Frog Racer* to suckers happy to be roped into £3-a-week ringtone subscription services by mad amphibians. We expected to see the little fella racing around on his invisible bike, but no – he's sitting in a kart. Neither Axel F, nor the frog's ear-bleeding signature sound, are anywhere to be found.

The personality vacuum of new characters – Mafia Hen! Big Elk! Rasta Dog! – seems like a testing ground for new ringtones. It's one thing to put no effort into a game you know will sell regardless and another thing entirely to kick the faces of the people who'll buy it.

Honestly, we'd prefer to play with the frog's dangling member than this. It's ding-dinga-ling-ding-ringa-dinga-linga-rubbish.

MARK GREEN

+

- It's 'only' £20.

–

- No handling.
- Generic tracks.
- Nothing for Crazy Frog fans.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Konami Krazy Racers
Konami
NGC/55, 4/5
You'll find second-hand copies on Amazon for about seven quid. And it's ace too.



3 VISUALS

Featureless tracks and very limited animation. Poor.

1 SOUNDS

None of the Crazy Frog's noises. What's the point?

2 MASTERY

Thirteen odd years after *Mario Kart*, no lessons learned.

2 LIFESPAN

You can easily finish the whole thing off in an afternoon.

VERDICT

Odious can't-be-arsed coding, shoved out in the knowledge that it'll sell anyway. Deserves your contempt.

NGC **18**

FREE* GAME for your mobile phone!

FREE mobile game brought to you buy NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

YOU PLAY WE PAY

We tested dozens of games and picked out three of the most enjoyable titles...

SUDOKU MASTER!

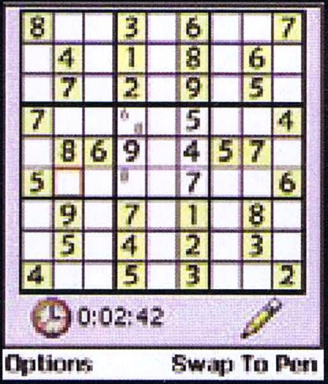
Mad 4 Games' version of this classic puzzle includes twenty boards plus an update option, multiple difficulty levels, unique hint mode, save game facility and a 'pencil' facility for when you're not quite sure! Use just one thumb to puzzle away the hours of tedium on your daily commute... and laugh at everyone else wrestling with pencil and paper in the crush!

MAYHEM'S MAGIC DUST

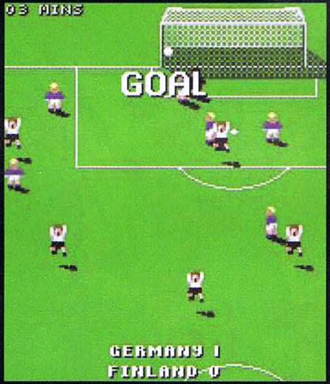
Those clever guys at Infinite Lives have produced one of the best arcade titles on mobile. Game aficionados will relish the challenge of guiding Mayhem through level after level of dragon-bashing, bird-hopping, score-seeking fun. This game would be great on a console: on a mobile, it's extraordinary.

SENSIBLE SOCCER

This mobile version of the legendary footy game, developed by Tower Studios and published by Kuju Wireless, features 11 game modes, accurate player performances and, on higher spec handsets, even action replays and bonus animations. The Sensible Soccer series already has 15 million users worldwide. Whether you're a serious or casual fan, this is your chance to join them.









Just choose one of the 3 titles listed then text **NINT** to **62344**. Check out the 'how it works' panel for more information. It's easy!

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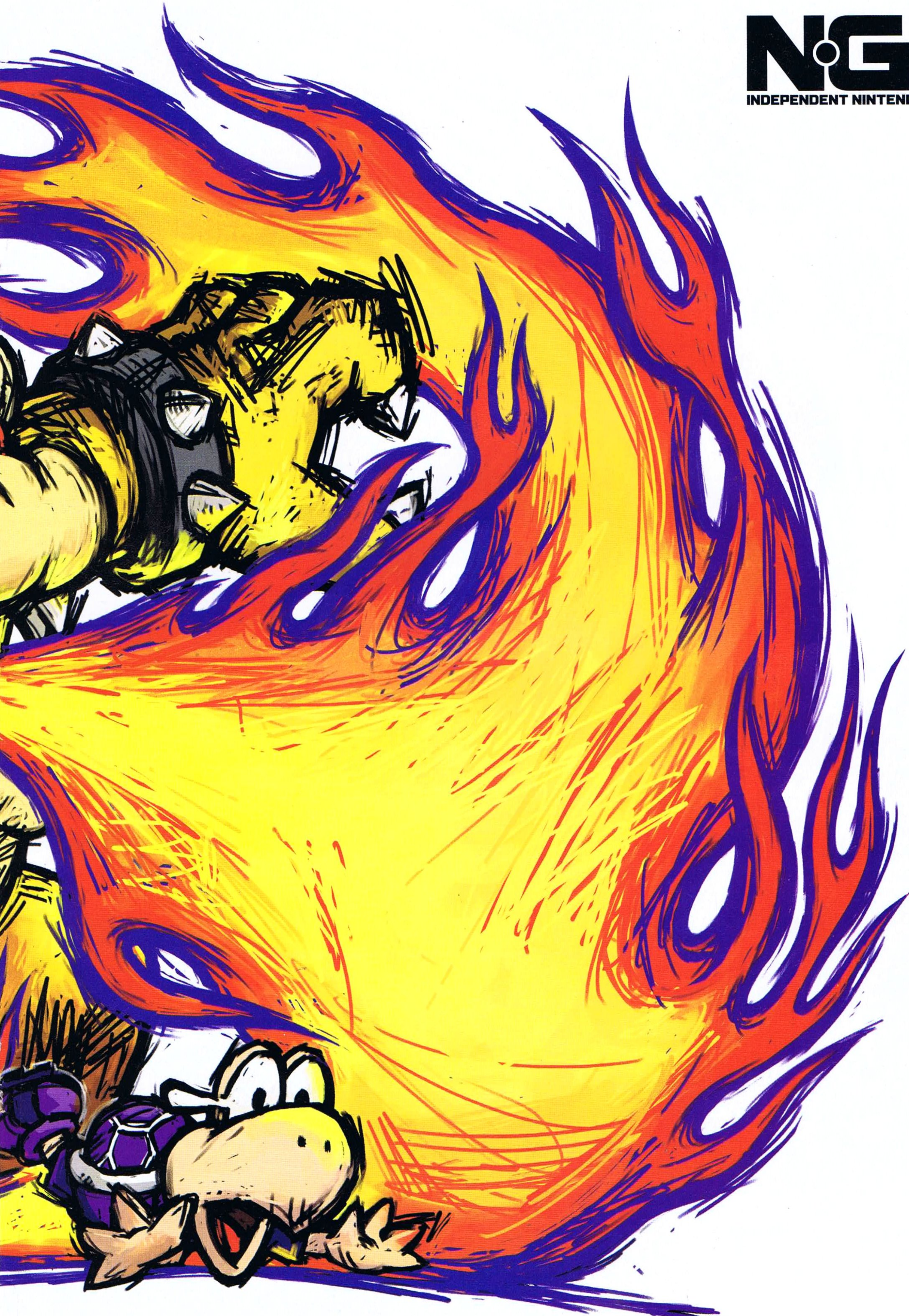
NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING





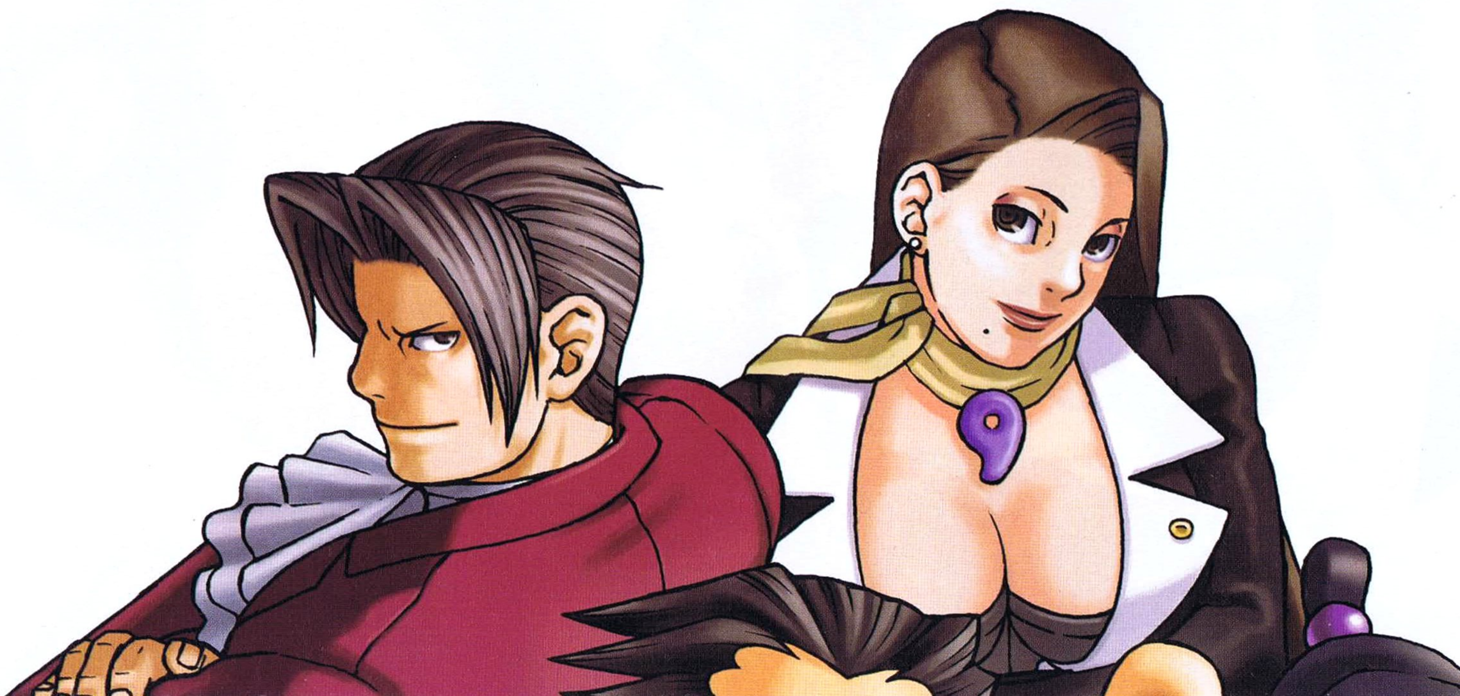

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Phoenix Wright™
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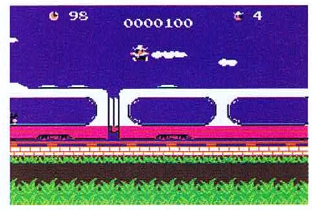


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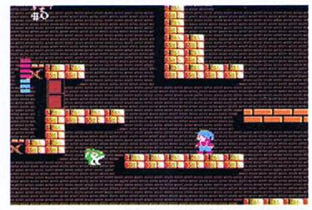




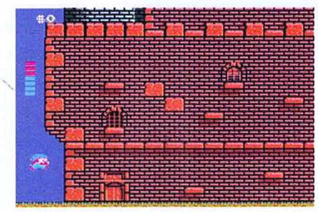
△ You're supposed to jump over the birds, really. But if you shoot them, they do a funny face for you.



△ "Stop the express!" the game says. But you never actually do.



△ One cart stuffed with 60 versions of this would beat *Mario Party*.



△ It might be fun, but it's not necessarily easy on the old eyes.

HUDSON BEST COLLECTION 3

One cart, two games, one sixth of collection.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	HUDSON
DEVELOPER	HUDSON
OUT	NOW (JAP)
PLAYERS	1
SAVE	NONE
SINGLE-CART LINK	NO
COST	2,940 YEN (AROUND £14)



You should all know Hudson – it's the one that's responsible for ramming *Mario Party* right down your throat every blessed year. But aside from that annual festival of happy craptitude, the company (motto: "Creating software for the human network") actually has an impressively long and illustrious history of tip-top pixellated products. And now here are the retro re-releases to prove it.

> THERE ARE NO REMAKES, SO ALL THE ORIGINAL SECRETS AND TECHNIQUES REMAIN

A couple of years back, Hudson brought some of its old SNES games back to life on Gamecube. Now it's gone all NES Classics on us with a six-volume celebration of the past. There's a *Bomberman* twin-pack, there's a compendium of ye olde *Lode Runner* platformers, and then there's this – a double showing of old 'action' games from the world's favourite boxy grey console of yore.

First up is *Challenger*, which is actually good fun. This game will also ring the brain-bells of anyone who owned a rubber-keyed computer in the 1980s, since it's basically a NES version of *Stop The Express* on the ZX Spectrum.

They really don't make them like this any more: four completely unrelated 'scenes' innocently tied together with a 'save the princess!' storyline. One minute you're leaping across the top of a moving train and daggering birds in the face; the next you're dumped in a desert where hordes of dancing skeletons block the entrances to caves. It's all incredibly weird, but we have to admit, we like it.

Game two is *Milon's Secret Castle*, and it's not so good. A sort of sideways *Zelda*, but massively more limited, it's a seemingly endless process of bouncing around mazes and throwing bubbles at baddies. "Hudson is glad to announce that there is a 'continuing option'," the original manual Japlished, and you can see why they're glad: sticky controls and nightmare bosses mean that Milon pops his clogs far too often.

Both games are squeezed onto the GBA's widescreen using NES Classics-style 'squash-o-vision'. It's a weird look, but it does mean you're getting the original game code – there are no remakes here, and so all the original secrets, techniques and glitches remain.

Still, with just two games on the cart – one of which really isn't much cop – and the fact that you'll have to pay way over the odds to get hold of any of these retro collections on import, we reckon you're better off shedding your nostalgic tears over something else.

MARK GREEN

+

- Squash-pixels, but accurate.
- *Challenger* is a love…

–

- ….but *Milon's Secret Castle* isn't.
- Poor presentation.
- Just two games?

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Arcade Advanced
Konami
Not reviewed
Frogger, Scramble, Time Pilot, Gyruss, Yie Ar Kung Fu and *Green Beret.*



3 VISUALS
These games look they were made in 1985 or something.

4 SOUNDS
An echo from the past: sweet music and sound effects.

2 MASTERY
About as much code as your average SMS, 'squeezed' onto GBA.

5 LIFESPAN
Only for those born in the '80s. The rest of you will yawn.

VERDICT
Hardly worth the bother of hunting it down. There are much better packages out there for the retro-headed.

NGC 55



"Suddenly it's uncomfortable"





△ Erk! Its claws are almost bigger than its face!



△ Flying green angel bloke meets baseball kid – inevitably, the bloke with the wings wins. There isn't much going on during the card-battle screens, but they do the job well enough.



△ Truly the face from hell. Save us.



△ We think the shop lady fancies us.



△ Say hello to Chumley Huffington.

YU-GI-OH! GX DUEL ACADEMY

Is that a Blue Eyes White Dragon in your pocket, or are you pleased to see me?

The DS version of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* managed to slip past our reviews guards undetected last year, despite the silly look-at-me name of *Nightmare Troubadour*. But it was a real gem all the same. If you're into your Fairy Meteor Crushes and Crimson Ninjas, you probably went a bundle on it.

And now this marathon of card-slapping battle limps onto a handheld near you, to show why it's probably about time you upgraded to DS. Yes, it's an improvement on previous GBA instalments like *Eternal Duelist Soul*, and it's got 1,300 cards. But suddenly it's uncomfortable to watch Yu-Gi-Oh!'s complexity crowbarred onto a single screen. *Nightmare Troubadour*'s 3D battles, split-screen accessibility and stylus-tapping naturalness… all that's inevitably gone out of the window in favour of pressing A seven times every minute to confirm that no, you don't want to use a spell card.

GX Duel Academy's tutorial isn't much cop either, and it's not the only reason you'll need a brain fizzing with Yu-Gi-Oh! knowledge to avoid tears – this game is very tough. The pretence – you're at some kind of freak-filled University of Card-Dealing – might trick you into believing that this'll be a gentle ride, but our tactics crumbled like rhubarb against even the easiest GBA-controlled players.

"YOU'LL NEED A BRAIN FIZZING WITH YU-GI-OH! KNOWLEDGE, AS THIS GAME IS VERY TOUGH"

There's at least a neat structure to *Duel Academy*, with you using your PDA to request duels with the locals, 'revising' for your exams, taking timed tests and earning cash to buy new packs of wafer-thin rectangular magic. And while matches last five times longer than they have to (because characters feel the need to tell you that they're attacking with a Hyena just before they attack with a Hyena), the choice views and the handy button shortcuts make hammering an opponent's life points as user-friendly as the GBA can manage. However, we're sure that the biggest attraction will be the three limited edition cards in the box.

There are plenty of reasons to ditch your GBA for a sparkly new DS, and if you're a Yu-Gi-Oh! nut, this should be top of the list.

MARK GREEN

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	KONAMI
DEVELOPER	KONAMI
OUT	NOW (US), TBA (UK)
PLAYERS	1-2
SAVE	ON-CART
SINGLE-CART LINK	NO
COST	$30 (£17)



+

- The best GBA *Yu-Gi-Oh!* yet.
- Tons of cards.
- Fairly fast paced.

–

- Too much faffing about with prompts.
- Story mode is barely there.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Duel Masters: Kaijudo Showdown
Atari
NGC/106, 3/5
Wizards of the Coast-made card game turns digital.



6 VISUALS

1,300 bits of card look as good as 1,300 bits of card can.

4 SOUNDS

The music isn't that bad. But then it isn't that good either.

5 MASTERY

Hardly a sparkling demonstration of the GBA's abilities.

8 LIFESPAN

Bursting at its little plastic seams with cards and challenges.

VERDICT

This is your best bet for GBA *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, but it's still a crushing disappointment after *Nightmare Troubadour*.

NGC **60**


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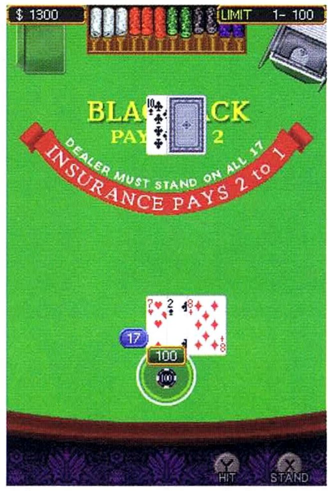
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An average gambling game? You bet

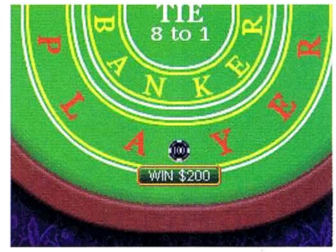


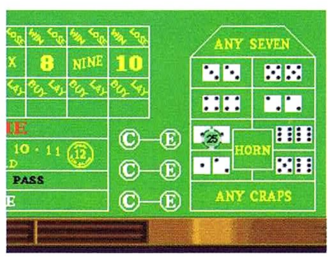


△ Roulette is about as visually complicated as it gets.



△ If you're scared of green, forget it.







△ No money, no risk. Exciting, isn't it?

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	SEGA
PUBLISHER	SEGA
PLAYERS	1-5
SAVE	ON CART
SINGLE CART LINK	YES
WI-FI	NO
MIC	NO
OUT	NOW
PRICE	£30



SEGA CASINO

All the 'fun' of a gambling weekend in Vegas – with none of the thrill…

We have to say we're in two minds about this one. On the face of it, there's nothing actually wrong with what's offered here – a collection of nine faithfully recreated gambling games for you to enjoy on your DS.

What is surprising is how sterile it all is. Enter the game and you have a very basic menu system driving the whole experience. Other than the annoying lounge-style music bleep-blorking away, there's nothing particularly Vegas-like about the package. It's very functional, very dull and lacking in glitz and glamour.

You could argue that this isn't a problem as long as the games are represented correctly, and they are. Still, when they're distilled to their bare bones, gambling games aren't very exciting. They're games of chance, which don't actually require much in the way of skill. The excitement, of course, comes from the fact that you're laying your hard-earned cash on the line. In videogame form, though, the risk factor of whether you can afford to feed your family for the next few months is instantly removed, thereby removing any of the excitement.

> "IT'S VERY FUNCTIONAL, VERY DULL AND LACKING IN GLITZ AND GLAMOUR"

What you're left with is a collection of games – Black Jack, Roulette, Craps, Baccarat and Poker – that you can dive into from the off, and then four more games – Chuck A Luck, Seven Card Stud, Keno and Video Poker – that can only be unlocked by earning enough money at the opening games. And unless you have any interest in gambling at all, this is a pretty tedious process.

The only redeeming feature comes from the five-player wireless option, but considering the hassle involved, you'd be better off just buying a pack of cards.

GERAINT EVANS

+

- If you like gambling, you'll like this.
- Faithful versions of popular games.

–

- Nothing in the way of presentation.
- None of the thrill.
- It's pretty dull.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Cards
Never reviewed
If you search your own homes, you'll probably find a pack of these somewhere…



6 VISUALS
Completely inoffensive, and they do the job as well as they need to.

5 SOUNDS
Ambient music that's simultaneously relaxing and annoying.

5 MASTERY
Virtually no effort has gone into sprucing up the presentation.

6 LIFESPAN
Even for gambling fans, there's nothing to hold your interest.

VERDICT
It's hard to criticise because it does its job perfectly well. Unfortunately, it's just all a bit dull.

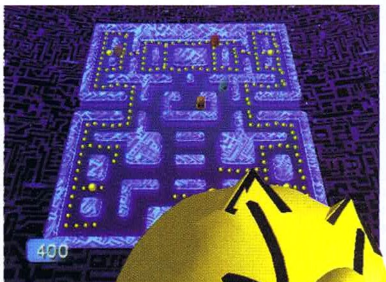
NGC 50


△ This is about as ambitious as the levels get.


△ These switches work like little treadmills.



△ Mini-games are hidden in each level.







△ These ghosts are being spewed out of an inter-dimensional rift. You can give them a good sorting out by finding the power pills. There are also some new and more powerful variants.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	BLITZ GAMES
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£30



PAC-MAN WORLD 3

The yellow muncher mellows with old age...

You'd think after watching the truly awful opening cut-scene that we'd be primed to give this a damn good kicking. You'd think after seeing how painfully unimaginative it all is that we'd be hard pushed to play it for more than five minutes, but for some very strange reason we found ourselves enjoying it. It's brainless, yes. It's laughably simple too – but then maybe that's what's so nice about it.

Still, you can't escape the fact that there's a shopping list of things that are very wrong with *PMW3*. To start with, it's technically ropey. The camera lacks any kind of versatility. Yes you can rotate it around Pac-Man, but more often than not, you're just not getting the angle you need. It doesn't always lead to death, but it makes you nervous about simple jumps.

> **"PMW3 FEELS UNASHAMEDLY GAME-LIKE – IT'S HAPPY AND IT'S ODDLY SATISFYING TOO"**

The framerate is shocking too. Get any more than three enemies on screen at any one time and it can drop considerably, which is lame considering it's not the most detailed game in terms of its environments. And then, of course, there's the small matter that there's virtually nothing here that we haven't seen done countless times before over the last ten years or so.

So while it's not going to win any awards for technical achievement or game design, why are we being so lenient? Well, it never takes itself seriously. It feels unashamedly game-like – It's happy, brightly coloured and oddly satisfying too. Progress is always quick and easy and the environmental puzzles engaging enough to keep you interested, while never being too convoluted to annoy or dishearten you.

Even that annoying dialogue finds the odd moment in its irritating schedule to be genuinely funny. No, it's hardly the greatest platformer ever – far from it – but it certainly isn't the worst.

GERAINT EVANS

+

- Simple, colourful, enjoyable fun.
- Nice and easy platforming.

–

- Rubbish camera.
- A few annoying bugs and glitches.
- Painfully unoriginal.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Billy Hatcher & the Giant Egg
NGC/58 86%
Another platformer involving round things. This one's a bit better though.



5 VISUALS
While they're sharp and simple, they're lacking in detail.

6 SOUNDS
The most satisfying spank noise ever to be heard.

4 MASTERY
Some nice big areas but a really poor framerate spoil them.

5 LIFESPAN
You get 15 levels of brainlessly easy platforming.

VERDICT
Simple platforming action that's all fairly enjoyable and totally inoffensive. Not bad.

NGC 64

NEXT MONTH

Faster than a speeding hedgehog…





SONIC RIDERS

Faster than *F-Zero*? Even more wondrous than *Wave Race*? Find out in our definitive review!

PLUS!

- *Reviews of Animal Crossing and Brain Training*
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- *Massive Resident Evil DS tips guide*

Magazine contents subject to change – but only for the better!

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YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO...

The Japanese Gaming Lexicon

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

Japan was, in many ways, where modern videogaming was born. As such, it should be no surprise to learn that the Japanese language is rich with words that describe the experience of videogaming. For the Japanese, words such as *nikagetsu* (inventing a new swearword during a deathmatch) and *kudarimashita* (the squeakiness of the unofficial third-party joypad) trip off the tongue as readily as *konichiwa* and *McFly*. It's not uncommon to hear "*Hyakuendama*!" ("Where is my memory card?") moaned in anguish in a Ginza district household of a Saturday afternoon, or hear a street vendor in Akihabara – Tokyo's famous 'electric town' – beckoning customers with the cry of "*Haraenai*!" (lit: "Here you can experience the unique frustration of the time-limited in-store demo!").

In this fifth edition of the Japanese Gaming Lexicon, we present a comprehensively updated list of the most commonly-used *tsuide ni*, or 'Nintenterms', invented and adopted by the Japanese.

amari (v.) Checking a strategy guide for the solution to a tricky puzzle in *Zelda*, then feeling like you could have worked it out for yourself if you'd just tried for a *little* bit longer.

anata (n.) The percentage probability that you will wake one morning to find that your village has been destroyed in a catastrophic fiery tragedy. The highest *anata* has been found to occur among young boys in Japanese RPGs.



Fig.1: Hyrule Village, prior to conflagration, *c.*2006

arimasen (n.) A vast discrepancy. Hence, the perceived cool of a 'street term' that a marketing executive inserts into an EA game, versus its actual cool. Similarly, the number of times the 'Health & Safety Warning' on the Nintendo DS start-up screen has been displayed, versus the number of times it's actually been read.

arimasu (n.) An aching of the left and right index finger that's commonly associated with prolonged use of the Nintendo DS shoulder buttons. By extension, the ache associated with prolonged GB Micro play. By extension, the ache associated with prolonged GBA SP play.

aruite (v.) Attempting to enjoy a two-player game against someone who hasn't got a clue what they're doing.



Fig.2: Cretin attempts to play *Mario Kart*, *c.*2006

asonde (adj.) *Asonde* is descriptive of a skill that is immediately forgotten the moment you have learned it. Hence, remembering which way to insert a Nintendo DS cart is *asonde*.

bareboru (adj.) Descriptive of a programming process, whereby an enemy in a first-person shooter is designed to be unable to open a door if you are standing behind it, and unable to do anything else except keep trying to open the damn door.

benkyou (v.) Playing a videogame with the sound turned down.

bii-chiimu (n.) A one-time occurrence. Playing the Nintendo DS with the backlight turned off.

chiisakute (v.) To *chiisakute* is to alternately use thumb and forefinger for button-hammering minigames in *Mario Party*, while remaining unsure which is actually faster.

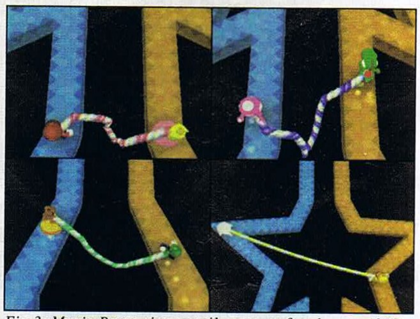


Fig.3: Mario Party gives retailers cause for cheer, *c.*1999

chotto (n.) A measure of distance. 1 *chotto* = 0.34 metres. Used to denote the length a Gamecube needs to be pulled towards the centre of the room in order to stretch the controller comfortably over to the sofa.

chuugakkou (n.) A brief period of panic experienced in the period between seeing a game at a ridiculously low bargain price in a shop, and the moment you actually get your hands on it. The tension experienced during a moment of *chuugakkou* is often heightened when a customer stands between you and the game box in question.

deguchi (n.) A nonsensical shortened version of a name. A *deguchi* is designed for use exclusively on name entry screens that only have space for five or six letters.

dekimasu (adj.) Descriptive of a comedy English accent adopted by an American actor whose only experience

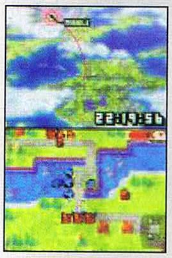
DICTIONARY OF GAMING TERMS

of the UK is watching Mary Poppins and Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels. The accent of the weapons seller in *Resident Evil 4* can be described as *dekimasu*.

dondon (v.) To *dondon* is to worry that fancying a female animal – for example, Amy the Hedgehog – is somehow very wrong.



Fig.4: Objects of desire are closer than they appear



gaikokujin (n.) The period in a person's life which comes between a) thinking *Advance Wars DS* "really isn't my kind of thing" and b) sitting up at 3am in the morning, wailing "Come oooon!" at your infantry, trying for an S rank.

ginkou (n.) A temporal anomaly as yet unexplained by science, which accounts for why it is impossible to complete any game before two o'clock in the morning.

hachigatsu (n.) The pleasurable sensation experienced when the Gamecube disc pops up as you press the central nub down.



Fig.6: Nubbin pressure leads to gasp of pleasure

hankachi (n.) The pregnant pause between throwing a Pokéball and waiting to see if the little git will actually break free.

hatsuon (v.) Singing along with the Gamecube start-up noise.

ikanai (n.) The point past which you slog on during an against-the-clock challenge, knowing you have no chance in hell of completing it in time.

ikimashita (v.) The loud, sudden scream reserved for when someone walks in front of the TV while you're playing *F-Zero*.

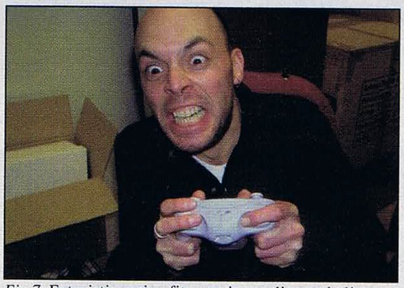


Fig.7: Futuristic racing fit; note impending embolism

ikimashou (v.) The habit of pressing the A Button to roll while journeying across a large open space in a *Zelda* game, in the vague hope that this will make the journey seem shorter.

iroiro (n.) The clicking sound emitted by the common deathwatch beetle (Xestobium rufovillosum). Also, the sound made by someone dejectedly pressing A to skip through a very long and boring speech by a very, very boring game character.



Fig.8: Cat-headed woman inexplicably boring, *c.*2003

jibun (v.) Pleasurably unpeeling the cellophane from a brand new Nintendo game with an easy-open strip. See also *utsushimashita*.

jisho (v.) The amount of time in a person's life spent winding and unwinding a joypad lead from around a joypad.

juugofun (v.) The realisation from across the room that your game character, who you thought could be left to stand safely in an unpaused state, is about to get mauled to death by enemies you didn't even know were nearby.

kadomatachi (n.) The moment when you know that you're going to be playing this game past the point where you should be starting to get ready to go out. See also *kadomotachi*.

kadomotachi (n.) The moment when you know that you're going to be playing this game past the point where you should be out.

kaeshite (v.) Attaining pleasure from stroking the indented A and B symbols on a Nintendo controller.

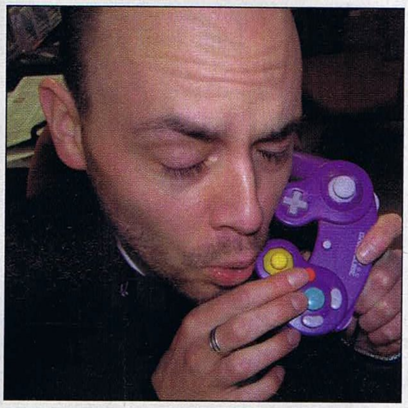


Fig.9: Gamecube pad simply *too* ergonomic

kagaku (v.) Opening a game box to find that there isn't a disc inside. See also *yuubinkyoku*.

kaisha (v.) Closing the curtains to play past a particularly dark dungeon in a third-person adventure.

kaketa (n.) The feeling that you probably should have saved your game a long time ago.

katazukenaide (adj.) A word used to describe someone who actually writes things down in the Notes pages at the back of a manual.

koboshite (n.) The moment when you realise the shop assistant at GAME isn't going to find the disc that matches your box.

kurushii (adj.) The creeping fear that you're going to get punished at the end of a game for saving so often.

machi (n.) The irresistible temptation to turn around and drive the wrong way around the track.

JAPANESE GAMING LEXICON

mada (n.) The sense of guilt that comes with carefully and deliberately adjusting the camera to look up a female game character's skirt, or down her top.

mamoranakereba (n.) The moment when a game character asks for an object that you remember leaving somewhere about half an hour's worth of map-trekking back.

miemasu (v.) The process of hunting for a game's manual, which you're sure must be around here *somewhere*. Didn't you leave it over on the sofa, or was it under the table?

moratta (adj.) Descriptive of a sudden climatic change from comfortable warmness to biting cold. Hence, the change in temperature in a room where one deathmatch player is enjoying a cruel winning streak against another.

moushiwake (v.) Idly leafing through the foreign language pages of the manual while you're waiting for a game to load.

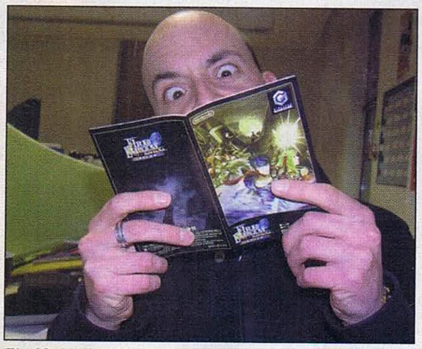


Fig.10: Limited intellect prevents translation of *kanji*

muzukashii (n.) A measure of the number of button presses it should take to actually save your game. 1 *muzukashii = 15 taps. The average* EA game measures 17.5 *muzukashii*.

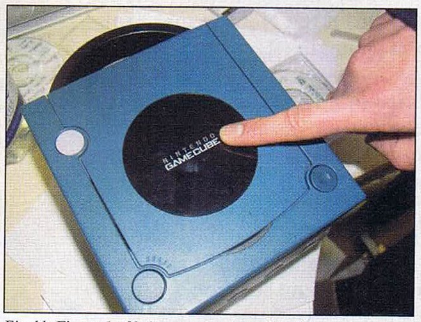


Fig.11: Finger-buffed to required gaming sheen

nakanaka (v.) Using your finger to wipe the thin layer of dust off your Gamecube's lid.

narimashita (n.) The fear experienced before unpausing the game in the middle of an *F-Zero* track.

naritai (n.) The special rule inserted by Nintendo into *Mario Kart* code, which ensures that a third-placed racer will only pick up single green shells and banana skins.

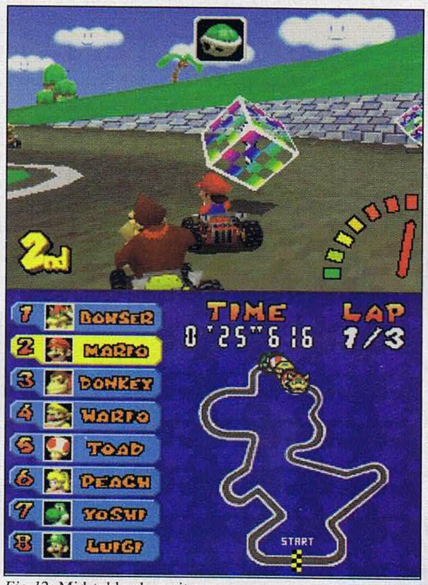


Fig.12: Mid-table obscurity

natte (v.) The spine-tingling unease that comes with being unsure if the noises in your headphones are coming from *Resident Evil 4*, or whether they're coming from behind you.

nomanakute (v.) The high-pitched laughing that's most commonly heard when *Wario Ware*'s minigames get really, *really* fast.

nomimasu (adj.) Limp; insipid; beyond repair or use and barely fit for its original purpose in the first place. A squashed Game Boy Advance box.

nuu (n.) A period of some hours spent trying to activate, attack and talk to every person, object and piece of furniture in a room in an RPG, due to having no frickin' clue what you're supposed to be doing or where you're supposed to be going next.

oisogashii (adj.) A word used to describe someone who plays racing games with manual gears.

omoshirokatta (n.) The unnerving feeling as you approach the finish line on a *Mario Kart* track that you're about to get hit with a shell. Usually experienced just before you get hit with a shell.

omotte (v.) The process of pressing random buttons in the hope of finding the secret combination that will skip past the cutscene.

oshiete (adj.) Being unsure whether starting a new game in *Pokémon* will overwrite your old one.

samui (n.) The mild fear that's felt while standing on a precarious platform and forgetting which button jumps and which one fires.

sekai-kakkoku (n.) The scientific term for a form of amnesia that makes it impossible to remember what any game character, except for Mario, wears on their feet.

senden (n.) A special manufacturing process, patented by Nintendo, whereby the Wavebird's right shoulder button is made to instantly break if the pad is thrown across the room.



Fig.13: Hallucinatory properties of coloured blocks

shibafu (adj.) A talking animal.

shigoto (n.) Clinical condition by which *Tetris* blocks fall in front of your eyes as you're trying to get to sleep.

shika (adj.) A game which displays 'Press Start' on the title screen, but refuses to start unless you press A.

DICTIONARY OF GAMING TERMS



Fig.14: Palpable sexual tremor from comestible

shinseihin (n.) The tingle of pleasure experienced when the item you want from the snack vending machine requires you to press 'F0'.

shuppatsu (v.) Reaching the final "Congratulations!" screen of a game, and being unsure if resetting the console will mean having to do everything from the last save again.

sono (n.) A design process whereby Game Boy Advance boxes are made so that the end you open is always opposite to where the actual cartridge is.

sunde (adj.) Descriptive of the look that passes over Shigeru Miyamoto's face when he's asked if he's going to make another *Kid Icarus* game.

supoutsu (adj.) A game feature that clearly should have been ditched a long, long time ago. The voice that croaks "Resident… Eeevil" at the start of every *Resident Evil* is *supoutsu*.

tabenaide (n.) The frustration of trying to get your parents to do anything like understanding how to control a videogame.

taipuraitaa (v.) Worrying about powercuts when the game warns, "Do not switch the console off or remove the Memory Card".

tanonmaremashita (v.) Playing a game while resting the telephone underneath your chin.

tanoshii (n.) The exact moment that you realise you've wasted £40 on a truly terrible game.

tatemono (v.) Skipping through the audio tracks on *SSX* or *FIFA* to get to the one song you actually like.

tookakan (n) The lengthy pause taken before embarking on a challenge across floating, moving platforms that you just know you're going to fall off.

tooku (n.) A small library. Hence, the number of Health & Safety Precautions pamphlets in the average gamer's collection can be described as a *tooku*.

tooremasen (adj.) Useless; fallen into disuse. The Gamecube's analogue shoulder clicks.



Fig.15: Walking the razor's edge

torarenai (v.) The fear associated with continuing to play on a Nintendo DS that is displaying a red battery light.

totemo (n.) Motion sickness, or the feeling you get when wrongly-set controls leave you staring at the floor in a first-person shooter when you were trying to aim up.

totsuzen (v.) To *totsuzen* is to scream gutterally through clenched teeth. Usually reserved for the moment where your stupid bastard monkey topples off into space for the 150th consecutive time.

tsukurimasu (adv.) The measure of how satisfyingly a humble lightbulb shatters when it's shot in an FPS.



uchiawasate (n.) A minuscule measurement of pressure. A build-up of *uchiawasate* can be seen in the way a new handheld console is treated over time: first, it is handled as though it were a fabulously fragile jewel; eventually, it is being snapped shut, and thrown across the room.

utsushimashita (v.) Dejectedly unpicking the cellophane from a non-Nintendo game with a distinct lack of an easy-open strip.

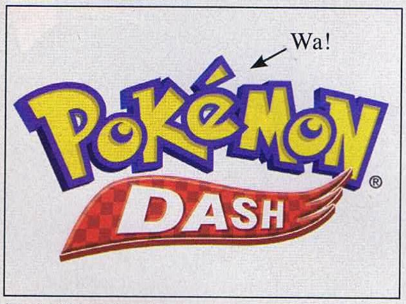


Fig.17: The accent of love

wa (n.) The little 'é' in Pokémon.

wakarinikui (n.) The combination of guilt and glee associated with burning a Pikmin alive.



Fig.18: Indigenous plant-homunculus before immolation

yasumitagatte (n.) Repeatedly entering a cheat that clearly isn't going to work.

yogorete (n.) Never being entirely sure which is the Reset button and which is the one that opens the lid.

yoku (v.) Frantic prowling in a primitive, apelike manner as you look for the least fragile item to throw across the room after a game has handed you your ass for about the 75th time.

yuubinkyoku (adj.) Describes a person who puts a game disc back in the correct box after they've played it.



Fig.19: Rare sighting of young *yuubinkyoku*, c.1891



WIN AT MARIO KART DS

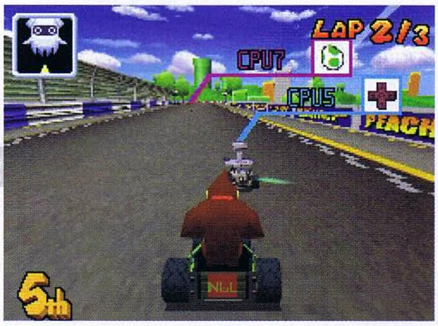
RACING TIPS

Your guide to the fundamental things you need to remember when aiming for multiplayer mastery...



BEAUTIFUL BOOST

It really goes without saying, but corner boost whenever you can. Possibly the best corner booster in the game is Dry Bones in the Dry Bomber, as each corner boost with him is like using a mushroom. Shame his top speed is a bit guff, though. The corner boost is perfect for the twistier, narrower courses like DK Pass. However, some chicanes – such as the final twisty bit of road leading up from the beach to the finish line on Cheep Cheep Beach – are better navigated by finding the straightest line through.



WEIGHT MATTERS

The weight of the heavier characters doesn't seem to matter so much in *Mario Kart DS*, and we'd rather play with a lighter character who isn't drawn to a halt by so much as a touch of trackside grass or dirt. On the other hand, on narrower, borderless tracks such as parts of Banshee Boardwalk or Rainbow Road, the heavier characters can use their heft to ram lighter opponents off the road, especially with the aid of a mushroom.



SLIPSTREAMING

This is where the lower screen comes in useful. Getting a speed boost from slipstreaming can be a game-winning clincher, but it's fraught with danger. Use the lower screen to see if an opponent is slipstreaming behind you, and if you're holding a banana, green shell or fake item box, now's the time to use it.



THE RISK/REWARD MECHANIC

It's worth hanging on to certain valuable power-ups, such as the blue shell, in order to use them at the best possible moment. However, be aware that you'll drop what you're carrying if you're hit by lightning or if another player uses a star. As such, you should always keep an eye on the player roster at the top left of the screen so you know what your opponents have got.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

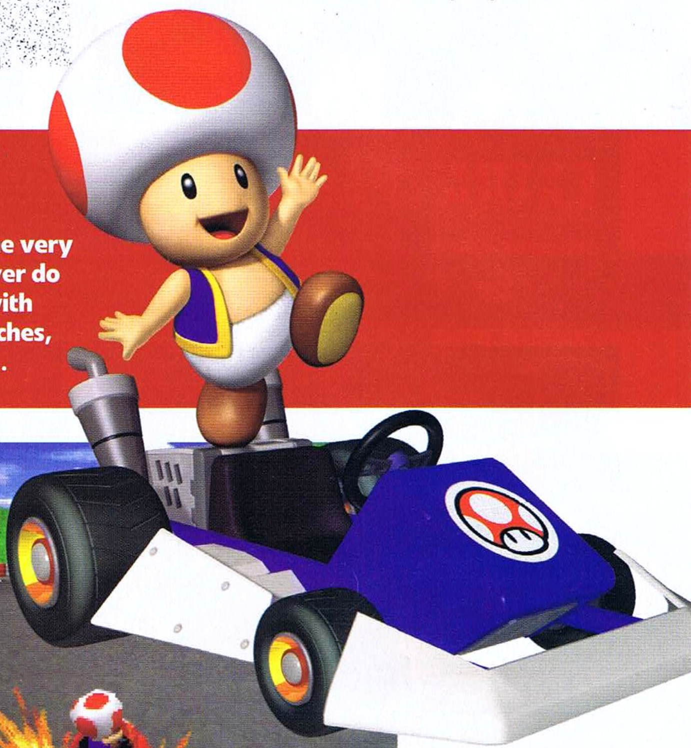
It's Mario Kart, but on DS. And we reckon it's the best Mario Kart ever! It's got 16 brilliant new tracks, plus 16 classics from other versions of the game, along with a handling model that incorporates the tightness of the SNES game with the corner-boosting beauty of MK64 and Double Dash. It even has eight-player wireless multiplayer and four-player online madness, plus a huge mission mode and the ever-addictive time trialling! Basically, we're in love with it. Sigh.



WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 114

At the end of the day, no one could possibly resist the prospect of an eight-way battle dust-up.

NGC 5/5



SNAKING – THE DEVIL'S WORK!

Snaking is generally a practice reserved for heels, blackguards and the very desperate indeed. It is, in short, frowned upon in polite company. Never do it while playing Friends online, and only in local area Wi-Fi matches with everyone's consent. For those Worldwide and Continental online matches, though, everyone is fair game. That being said, here's how to snake…



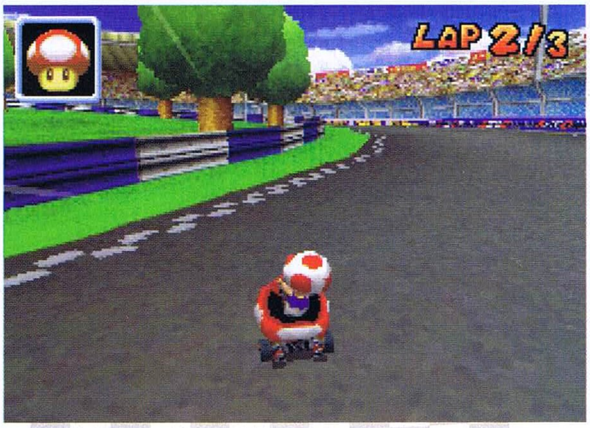
Snaking is essentially corner boosting all the time, especially on wide straights. Play Figure 8 Circuit online enough times and you'll see people zig-zagging across the track and disappearing into the distance. This, friends, is snaking.



The trick is to get into a powerslide while heading as straight down the track as possible. It's really tricky and you'll need to be quick of finger, especially as you have to pull off a corner boost as quickly as possible.



Here's the tricky bit. After you've pulled off a boost, you need to push in the opposite direction on the D-Pad and hit R at exactly the same time to go into a new slide.



Keep boosting and doing this and you should zig-zag across the track in a fairly straight line. It's a tricky thing to master, though. A tricky thing indeed.

CHOOSING TRACKS

The code of conduct concerning the choice of tracks is a gentlemanly one. When playing one-on-one, it's customary to go with the track that's chosen first, and then, in the next round, allow whoever didn't get to choose a track to make the call. In three- or four-player games, the best tip, if you want avoid playing the interminably dull Figure 8 circuit or (yawn) Rainbow Road, is to wait and see what your opponents choose and then side with the best option available.





EXTRA TRACK TIPS

We gave you a free *Mario Kart* guide in issue 115, but here are some extra tips and tricks to set you on the road to success…

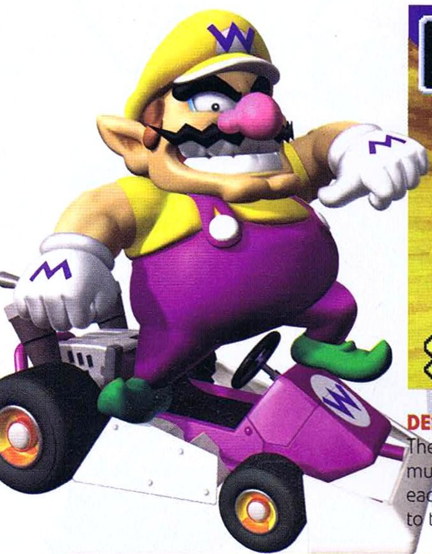


CHEEP CHEEP BEACH
After the second speed-up ramp, there's an area where the tide rolls in and out. With a mushroom and the tide out, this provides you with an excellent opportunity to get ahead.





LUIGI'S MANSION
Always lay shells and bananas in the hallway that leads down to the basement. When you've got mushrooms, always zoom across between the graves on the strip of grass to the left of where you exit the mansion.





DESERT HILLS
The track here chicanes around sandy hills, and with mushrooms or a star, you can zoom over the hills and cut out each corner. There's also shortcut that requires a mushroom to the left of the building by the start line.



DK PASS
Use mushrooms and stars to cut over the big snowbanks to the left as you're going up the hill. On the final snowbank (the one after the bit where the snowball rolls down the hill), you'll find an item box. This will give you a star almost every time.



BOWSER CASTLE
There's a splendid shortcut here. When you reach the rotating room, don't head for the exit straight ahead. Instead, keep powersliding around and you'll reach a tunnel that leads directly to the spiral staircase bit. You'll have to watch out for the flame jet by the entrance and the Thwomp inside, though.





FRAPPE SNOWLAND
There are no real shortcuts here – the old glitch from the N64 where you could head off-course and get put back later on in the track is sadly absent – but like Desert Hills, you can zoom over the snowy corners with the aid of a mushroom.


Don't insert coin!
Namco Museum
50th ★ Anniversary
Pac-Man
Galaga
Ms. Pac-Man
Dig Dug
Pole Position
Just play!

NGC TELLS YOU
HOW TO...

Finish the game in record time...

MARIO & LUIGI PARTNERS IN TIME

NGC GUARANTEE 100% COMPLETION

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Journeying from the present to save the past, Mario and Luigi must team up with the only people who've got the same skills they do: Mario and Luigi! With toddler versions of themselves in tow, the most famous plumbers in the world have got a big adventure ahead of them, as both Bowser and the alien Shroobs are menacing the Mushroom Kingdom of the past!



WHAT WE SAID

It's not so much the mechanics of the game that make it so appealing. Rather, it's the innate Mario-ness of it all; the personality and charm it exudes. And while it doesn't last long, it's still an inventive and laugh-out-loud funny RPG. It's hard not to find yourself nodding and smiling in appreciation of the cleverness of it all.

NGC 90

PEACH'S CASTLE (PAST)

Move as directed to get into a heavily supervised scrap with a young Prince Bowser. Just keep bouncing on his head until he drops.

PEACH'S CASTLE (PRESENT)

Go and fetch the Refreshroom that Toadsworth needs, but feel free to ransack the castle along the way. When you return to the throne room, you'll wind up in another tutorial battle. This time, it's with the Junior Shrooboid. Whup it, then head south from the throne room to investigate the Time Hole.

TIP: LEVELLING MARIO

If left to his own devices, Mario will be offensively focused to a fault. His POW and SPEED stats will rapidly rise above the others, but he'll have few HP and little DEF. Clothing can compensate for the DEF issue, but you'll want to toss a few of his level-up points into HP. The STACHE score won't rise as you level up – the higher it is, the higher your discount at shops.

HOLLIJOLLI VILLAGE (PAST)

Sit through Stuffwell's tutorials and dispatch all the Shrooblets as you head towards Hollijolli. Luigi's operating on a bit of an EXP deficit at the moment, so this will help. When you reach the village, search the intact buildings for loot and then check out the mayor's house. Punch the mayor out of his chimney and you'll wind up in a fight you can't win.

TIP: LEVELLING LUIGI

Luigi is the opposite of Mario, favouring HP and DEF over POW. His SPEED will truly suck unless you step in and take a hand.

KOOPA CRUISER (PAST)

Hop across the crates, robbing the blocks as you go, to reach the bridge.

HOLLIJOLLI VILLAGE (PAST)

Bring the babies to rendezvous with their adult counterparts. Toadsworth will helpfully provide Green Shells – one of the most potent offensive weapons in the game – and you can use these to defeat the Shroobs with ease.

BOWSER'S CASTLE (PAST)

This is the first real dungeon of the game. The second room will require you to climb up and use the narrow overhead path, and the third will reunite you with the babies. Give them piggyback rides to continue, then step on the blue pressure plate. This will soon become a familiar sight, and it will only activate if all four characters are standing on it.

In the fourth room, toss the babies so they can hit the pipe block and then grab them again. Next up is the Koopa Gymnasium, where you can send the babies through the hole in the wall for loot. To progress, use the floor block.

Next, toss the babies onto the ledge by the sixth room's Save Album. Have them hit the pipe block, then pick them up again and toss them both onto the ledge. Hit the exclamation block and you'll lower the ledge. The next room will teach you about Piggyback attacks, which are actually more trouble than they're worth. Now cross the bridge.

Travel through the pipe to move on, and then throw the babies onto the ledge above the sign. You need to send them into the side tunnel where they can use the block to raise the bridge. Cross the bridge to the next room and, once again, throw the babies up so they can hit the exclamation block. Take control of Mario and Luigi and activate the dual blocks. Go back to the babies and head right, through the two Goombas, and on to another set of dual blocks.

Cross the now lowered platforms to reach the next set of dual blocks, which the babies can reach from above via their tunnel. You now have to activate them to lower the next bridge.

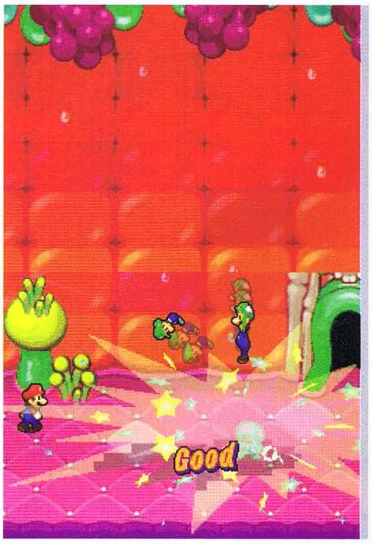
In the final room, walk around the fence and toss the babies up onto the ledge. In the subsequent room full of spikes, have Mario or Luigi hit the large block and, depending on its colour, it will drop a Shine Block into the darkness for the babies. Use the short-lived burst of light to navigate the bridges. They will lead you inside the fence, where you can open the treasure chest.

PEACH'S CASTLE (PRESENT)

Speak with the Professor to open a new Time Hole. The Shroom Shop is now also open, so make the most of this opportunity to upgrade your clothing. Buy Pep Badges for Mario and Luigi, as well as a lot of Bro Flowers.

TOADWOOD FOREST (PAST)

You can toss the babies into the hollow stumps that are scattered throughout the forest, where they'll be able to find hidden items or, occasionally, ambushes. Use the springboard to escape.



Luigi gets rewarded for kicking a baby very hard in the arse. Typical Nintendo.



The brothers were shocked to discover how badly Britney had let herself go.

MARIO & LUIGI PARTNERS IN TIME

Finish the game in record time



Professor E Gadd chuckles as he prepares to throw the power switch on his new invention – a giagantic smoothie maker. Mario and Luigi look away from the horror.

Go north to meet Toadiko, then head east. When you reach the trees that are blocking the path to the Vim Factory, go to the southwest clearing and toss the babies into the tree stump, where you'll find a tunnel network. Have the babies hit each of the fire boxes down there, which will push them up to ground level. When Mario and Luigi punch them, the fire will become concentrated in the central box. When you've put all six flames inside it, punch the central box to incinerate the trees in front of the Vim Factory.

VIM FACTORY COURTYARD (PAST)

Go east and toss the babies into a tree stump. There you'll find the activation switch for the nearby moving platforms. Punch it when it's pointing in the desired direction to guide Mario and Luigi across the spikes. The path you want is on the far side of the ledge. Go north and use the warp block to reclaim the babies, put Baby Luigi on Luigi's back and jump.

At the apex of the jump, hit Y to make the baby jump and hit the high dual block. When your characters orient themselves, jump left to right to activate the conductor. Leave via the northern exit and drop the babies into a stump. Use the controller block in the stump to send Mario and Luigi across the spikes to the next clearing, then warp the babies back to your side and activate the second conductor tower.



A cunning variation on the old 'three queens' trick. Pick an egg – any egg…

Go one screen south and, once again, use the babies to steer the platform for the adults. Watch out for the yellow blocks, which can push you off. After raiding the plentiful treasures found amid the spikes, exit to the southeast and enter the Vim Factory.

VIM FACTORY (PAST)

Make sure you heal the babies before you enter – they've got a boss fight to deal with: the Hamm3r Bros. Rely on Green Shells and Bro Flowers to do your damage here. The Bros will attack with salvos of up to three hammers at a time, or an easily dodged rolling attack. They'll also often throw the hammers high to try to fake you out, so watch their arcs carefully.

Once you've trashed them, they'll reward you with hammers of your own, and they'll also teach you the Baby Drill technique. You can use the latter to drill into the floor panels marked with an X to collect Beans, and to circumvent certain closed gates.

TIP: AVOIDING COMBAT

You can use the Baby Drill to get through heavily populated areas without a fight.

Hop onto the yellow floor panel to open the gate, then smash and drill into the next room. Drill under the gate to the upper right-hand corner of the room, then climb the staircase and walk across the top of the wall to the room to the south. Use the hammer to hit the wall switch, go up the stairs and walk along the wall to the south.

Jump across the gap between this area and the room to its left, then drop down to hit the second wall switch. Drill underneath the gate and climb the stairs to reach the staircase you've just constructed. After a jaunt through the building's pipes, you'll end up at a fork in the road. Go left for a pair of Unarmed Jeans, then go right and shatter the four Blubs that are feeding the tree. This will free Mario and Luigi. Defeat the Spiked Shroombas with the babies' hammers and then throw the babies up onto the ledge to the upper right. Smack the wall switch to open the exit gate.



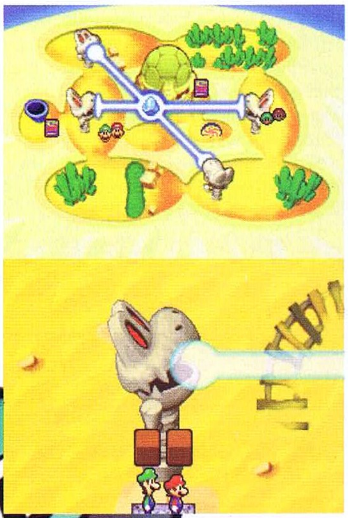
TIP: SHELL SKILLS

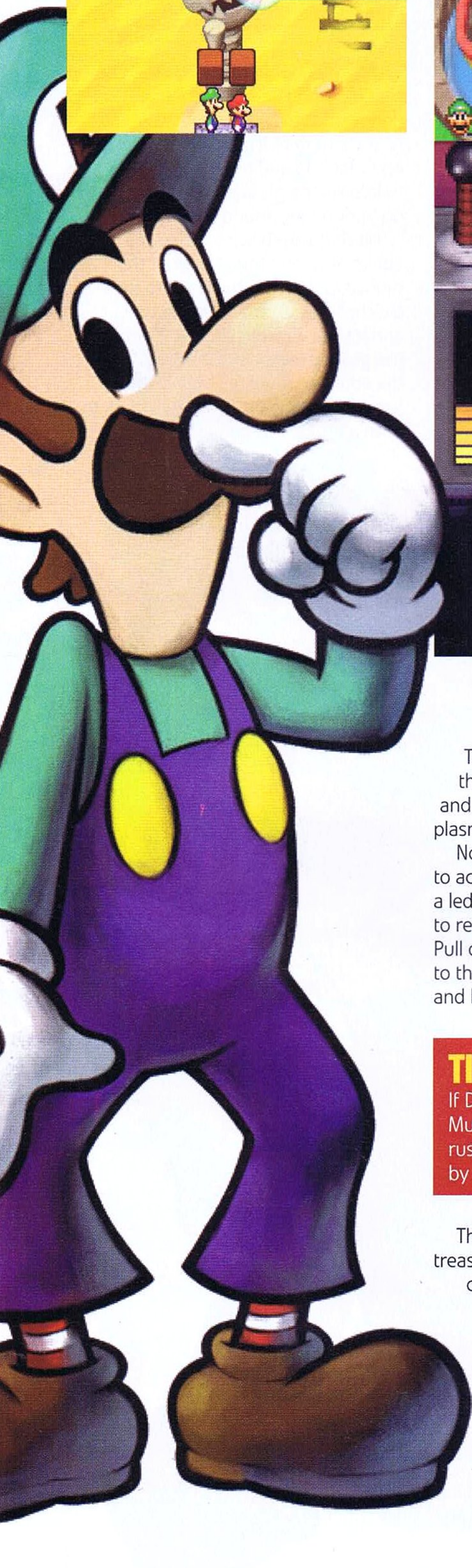
Keep plenty of Green Shells on hand for unbounceable enemies, such as Spiky Shroobs. If Mario and Luigi encounter them without the babies, they'll need to use Bro Items.

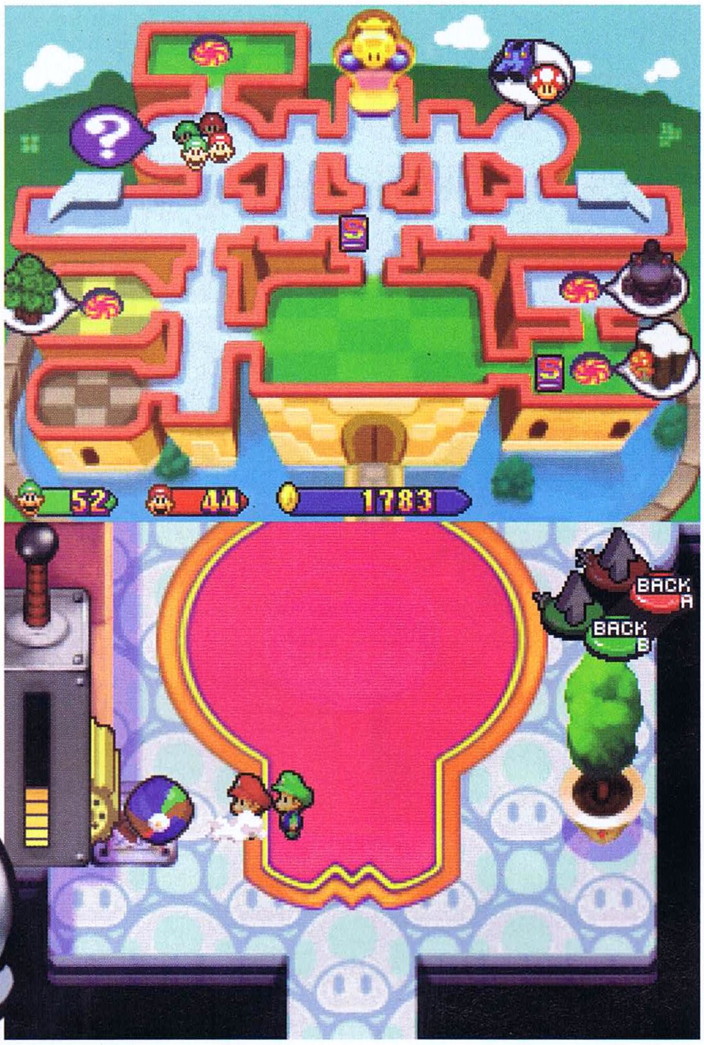
You're back in the main hall. Use the blue floor panel to open the gate, then dodge or destroy the enemies in the next room to reach the warp pipe. Go one room up and use the babies' Drill to bypass the gate. Hit the switch, then go back underground and head right.

Hit the warp block to bring the adults over, and then clear out the monsters. Toss the babies onto the overhead platform, enter the tunnel and hit the wall switch. This'll turn off the ground-level electrical arc. Move the adults past the arc, deal with Dr Shroob, and then use the dual block to raise a bridge for the babies.









Macintosh users will recognise the 'spinning beach ball of death' above. The rest of the world, look away. There's nothing for you here.

Take control of them again, cross the bridge, drill underneath the gate and hit the wall switch to turn off a plasma fence in the way of the adults.

Now activate the babies' dual block to activate the adults' block. This'll raise a ledge for the babies, allowing them to reach the balcony above the adults. Pull out your Hammer and head back to the left, smashing crates on the way, and hit the wall switches.

TIP: SHROOB SHROOM

If Dr Shroob is allowed to eat his Mushroom, he'll launch a powerful rush attack. Knock it out of his hand by damaging him.

The left gate leads to a special treasure block; the right to a long corridor. Dispatch the enemies and throw the babies onto the ledge. Use the controller block to ferry Mario and Luigi across to the exclamation block, then hit it to make a bridge. Send Mario and Luigi the rest of the way across the electrical field, then bring the babies over to meet up with them again. Save, then go and take on the Swiggler. If it's allowed to use its full attack routine on you, you'll be hard-pressed to stay alive. Instead, use a Bro Flower every round. This'll spoil the Swiggler's glass of Vim and knock the Dr Shroobs' mushrooms out of their hands. If the Swiggler gets to attack at all, it'll be with an easily dodged Earthquake auto-counter.



The brain-hurting intricacies of a four-character, four-button control system.

PEACH'S CASTLE (PRESENT)

Report to the Professor and then go to see Toadsworth. He'll teach you the Spin Jump, which you can use to reach the new Time Hole in the library.

YOSHI'S ISLAND (PAST)

Visit the second open house to meet Kylie Koopa and use the spring platform as directed. After the ensuing catastrophe, go to the last intact house to find the Magikoopa. Follow her out of town to the warp pipe.

After the Magikoopa sets the fires, send Baby Mario to stand in the spring. Fill him up, then spit to douse the bonfire. Send the adults ahead to clear the monsters out of the way and then head east. Send the babies up using the spring block, then use the spring to refill Baby Mario. Spit into the blue pipe to douse the fire, and then hit the first exclamation block.

TIP: PIDGITS

To dodge or counter Pidgits, you have to wait until the last second.

TIP: COCONUTTERS

Coconutters' attacks all come from behind you. If one raises its spear, dispatch or dizzy it before its next turn, otherwise it'll heal the entire enemy party.

TIP: GNARANTULAS

To counterattack Gnarantulas, swing your Hammer as they're descending from their second hop.

Go west to reach the Spin Jump Training Grounds. Drill underneath the northern gate, then dispatch the monsters inside and fill Baby Mario up. Spit water into the two earthwork pipes to extinguish the bonfires.

Spin Jump across the platforms to reach the exclamation block. Note that you can adjust your horizontal position in mid-air while you're Spin Jumping, which makes this a snap. Now head back to the central area and use the



As above, there's nothing to see here. Move along now, people.

MARIO & LUIGI PARTNERS IN TIME

Finish the game in record time

new green block to reach the fifth bonfire. Punch the conduit blocks until they form a network pointed at the fire and then send the babies up into the clouds to spit water into the blue pipe. Now you can activate the blue exclamation block.

Reunite the troops and press onward to the next warp pipe. Send Mario and Luigi along the upper path using Twister Spin Jumps – just Spin Jump into the tornado and press the D-Pad. The babies will have to head over to the spring platform and drop down from the clouds on the far side of the gap.

Go up one screen and Spin Jump to the ledges on the opposite side of the area. Hit the exclamation block to reveal a grate the babies can drill through. They'll find a spring platform, so use it to reach a spring. Now put out the final bonfire.

Again, you need to go up one screen, defeat the enemies there and then use a Twister Spin Jump to clear the gap. The babies will have to bounce up to the clouds and drop down onto the other side. Once you've got all four characters in position, step onto the blue floor panel.

Next up is a fight with Kamek the Magikoopa. To dispel her illusions, you'll have to bat her spiked balls straight back at her. Whichever Kamek actually takes damage is the real one. Once you've done about 40 points of damage, she'll ditch the broomstick in favour of flame waves. Hop over them and hammer her when she rushes you. You can use Green Shells while she's on the ground.

YOOB'S BELLY (PAST)

Jump up to the main chamber using the spring platform and then use the warp block. You'll need to rescue all the Yoshis to get out of here, so, taking each room from left to right:

- Defeat RC Shroober.
- Beat the wall switches until they're the same colour as the globes on the wall nearby. This will open a grate. On the other side, hammer the coloured switches until they match the pattern above the locked cell door.
- There's no Yoshi here.
- Send the babies into the upper room via the bounce platform, then drop down to the room below via the second hole from the left. Hammer the wall switch to create a bridge.
- Drill underneath the gate and fill Baby Mario up at the spring. Hit the flying saucer with water to blow a hole in the wall, then defeat RC Shroober.

TIP: HAMMER TIME

Use your Hammer to knock RC Shroober's saucers back at him.

TIP: BEAT BONES

Watch the bounce pattern on Dry Bones's thrown bones. They're often thrown high as a feint, so you'll try to dodge them and get hit instead.

TIP: BULLY BASHING

A Bully will power up and counterattack if it's hit directly. You can use your Bro Items to attack it safely, or rely on counterattacks of your own.



How will they fit a game with four characters on the new, smaller DS?

The last thing you need to do is toss the babies down one of the tree-like arteries to find a piece of fruit. Feed this to the starving Yoshi near the third door to complete the Yoshi train and push the rock into the hole. That will widen the corridor below you so you can reach the warp pipe out of here.

You'll catch up to the Yoshis one room later. Send the babies up and fill Baby Mario with water, then bring the adults over to the egg blocks. Punch the egg blocks to send them flying, then spray them with water to free the two Yoshis. With their extra brawn, the Yoshis can move the boulder.

Head south one room for items, then head back to the north to meet Toadbert. You'll fight Sunnycide shortly thereafter. Focus your attacks on the eggs – 29 points of damage will free a Yoshi. Free five Yoshis and they'll bounce a boulder off Sunnycide's head, allowing you to do some real damage. Use Green Shells, Cannonballs or jumps while it's prone.

PEACH'S CASTLE (PRESENT)

Restock, upgrade and talk to the Professor. Visit the Toadsworths to learn the Bros Ball technique, which you can use as directed to reach the castle sewers. Here you'll find Fawful, who will trade rare Badges for Beans.

GRITZY DESERT (PAST)

Go ahead and try to enter the Koopaseum – it won't end well! With that over with, you've got to activate two sets of dual blocks. Leave the babies in the western desert and send the adults around to the east side via the northern passage. You'll have to win a drag race using the Bros Ball, but it's easy enough.

When you reach the eastern statues, switch to the babies and make sure the adults are standing at the corresponding statue. Hit all four dual blocks in turn to activate the statues' lasers. Turning all four statues on will trigger the appearance of an exclamation block by the Koopaseum's entrance. Hit that to lower a ledge, allowing you to enter.

TIP: DEFEATING POKEY

You can knock off Pokey's lower portions with a Green Shell.

TIP: JUDGING HEIGHT

If Shrooba Divers throw a fish at you, it'll bounce high. If they throw a spiked ball, it'll go low.

KOOPASEUM (PAST)

Follow Kylie's captors. Spin Jump across the gap to reach the exclamation block, then use the Ball to enter the small gap in the wall. Spin Jump over the spikes, then ball up again and race through the maze. At its end, use the warp block to retrieve the babies.

In the next room, use the Shine Blocks to help the babies navigate the spike maze. It's no different from before, apart from being a bit harder. Once you've escaped, hit the wall switch to open the gate. Now ride the platform up to the stage.

You'll wind up fighting the durable but unremarkable Shrooboid Brat. Watch the audience on the top screen as they'll call the Brat's shots for it. Its lollipop can do serious damage if it connects, so use the warning to evade. As the Brat takes damage, it'll start throwing the lollies in salvos of up to three, or swallowing Fire Flowers and tossing fireballs. Just keep evading and countering. Use Ice Flowers to lower its DEF and follow up with Green Shells.

GRITZY CAVES (PAST)

Extinguish the fire near your starting point and break the wall behind it to find a hidden shop. Make sure you restock on items before you start.

Head one screen to the right and hit the exclamation block on top of the peak. This will lower a ledge, which will give you access to a series of platforms that you can traverse in Ball Bros form. Head through there, then resummon the babies and continue south. Clean up on treasure in this



The moment the brothers regretted going out for a curry the night before a hectic battle to save the world. Sometimes a little forward thinking really pays off.

room and the one below it (accessible via the doorway atop the walkway) and continue onward.

You can play a weird sort of slot machine in the next area. Power it with the Ball Bros technique and then send the babies through the grate to fill up Baby Mario. Shoot the item on the top screen when there's an identical item on the bottom and you'll get a star. Get three stars and you'll raise the bridge.

Cross the bridge and hit the exclamation block. This will give you a shortcut back to the entrance, if you need it. If you don't, head south and use the warp pipe.

This will bring you into a new section of the caves. Evade or dispatch the monsters as you go, until you reach the cogwheel. Toss the babies up onto the nearby ledge and let them navigate the platforms – the longer the Ball Bros are sitting there charging the cog, the faster the platforms will go. Hit all three of the treasure boxes and a column will descend in the area below, allowing Mario and Luigi to Spin Jump over the briar patch. Again, advance, summon the babies and continue.

Head south to the exit pipe, which leads to an ammo dump full of Bros Items and a floor panel. Hit the question block to battle Petey Piranha.

When Petey's flying, you can damage him with jumping attacks. He favours an aerial dive that'll bombard you with easily dodged debris. When he's grounded, he'll try to suck you underground, but you can evade this attack easily by jumping repeatedly. Bombard Petey with Bro Flowers.

After you defeat Petey, smash through the back wall of his lair and then tunnel underneath the closed gate. Hammer down the wall switch you find there and exit.

TIP: STOP THIEVES

To reclaim items stolen by a Dark Boo, defeat it before it has the chance to flee.

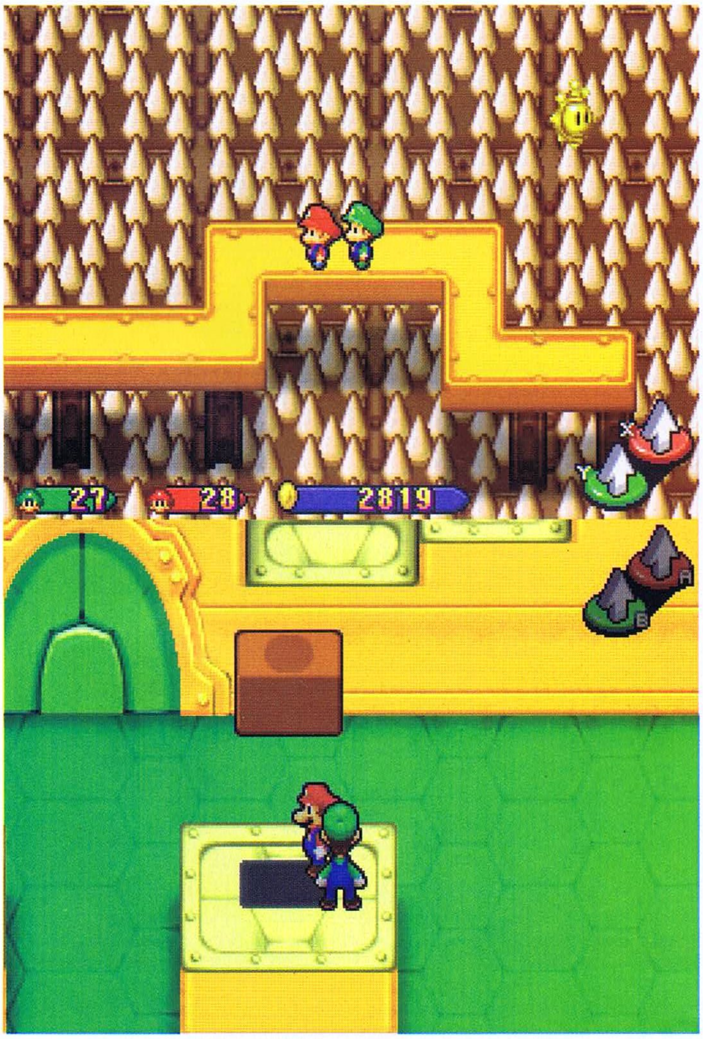
PEACH'S CASTLE (PRESENT)

Visit the Toadsworths to learn the Baby Spin and Baby Cakes techniques, the former of which will be necessary to rescue the baby Princess.

As directed, return to Princess Peach's bedroom and then follow Bowser into the Time Hole. You'll need to Baby Spin over to it.

THWOMP VOLCANO (PAST)

Use the Baby Spin to reach the exclamation block. Along with the Baby Cakes, it will let you reach quite a few of the treasures as you're climbing up the mountainside.



Lighting the way with the power of Shines. Not immediately obvious, this bit. Ahem.



Cruising to victory, thanks to our super easy guide to Mario mastery.



Moments from failure, having misunderstood our instructions.

When you reach the penultimate room on this map, have the babies stand next to the hole in the wall and then flatten them. You'll barely have enough time to send them into the cavern's propeller updraught before they reinflate. Use it to reach the springboard, which will toss them up to a higher level. From here, they can hammer an exclamation block down to the adults. Hit that to open the nearby door, which leads to the warp pipe.

Baby Spin and Spin Jump across the field of spikes. The next room has another cavern – flatten the babies before they enter and then let them ride the updraughts to the exclamation block. Now the adults can catch up to them, so activate the floor panel.

Climb the mountain until you reach the fifth area. Here, Cake the babies and send them inside. Park them on the updraft, then Spin Jump into the cogwheel to accelerate the propeller. They'll shoot up and past an exclamation block. Drop down to it and use it to raise the bridge. It's just a short distance to the next warp pipe.

Once you're through, you'll need to send the Caked babies into another cavern. As before, put them in the wind and then Spin Jump into the cogwheel. Wait for the platform to move through the updraft, then settle onto it and jump across the gaps to the exclamation block. This will lower the barrier outside.

After navigating another series of monster-rich paths, you'll reach the volcano's rim... and you'll have to leave pretty quickly! Run southwest towards the Save Album and Spin Jump into the left-hand cogwheel to open the door. Inside, Spin Jump into the valve in the corner of the room, then fill up Baby Mario and spit nine water bubbles at the flaming Thwomp.

You can now use the nearby warp pipe as a shortcut back to the Time Hole. Otherwise, continue back to the volcano, where you'll meet Mrs Thwomp. You can only damage her (as opposed to triggering her transformation, which doesn't count as far as damage goes) when she splits into four smaller rocks. Wait and counterattack them. The one with the best teeth and no crack in her head is the real Mrs Thwomp. Focus on her and only damage her duplicates if it's to counterattack them.

TIP: THWACK 'EM!

Thwacks are easy to counterattack. They're fast, but the sounds they make will help you to get the rhythm down.

TIP: COUNTERATTACK

Tanoombas are unpredictable so watch their drop attacks carefully. It's easier to counterattack the Thwomp than the Tanuki.

THWOMP VOLCANO INTERIOR (PAST)

Head right, then Baby Spin up into the tornado and press right on the D-Pad. Follow the trail of coins you find, then hit the ground and head to the right until you reach the cannon. Backtrack to the hole in the wall and send in the babies. When you're directed to,



We wish the carpets in our office had this mushroom motif. It'd be ace.

MARIO & LUIGI PARTNERS IN TIME

Finish the game in record time



The boys just slid through that pipe o'slime. Baby Mario is ready to burped.

load the cannon with the Ball Bros and smack the wall switch. Grab a few gems, make an easy jackpot and get back out of there. That creates a new bridge, which will lead you to a Thwomp elevator.

When it stops, take a left and toss the babies into the hollowed out Thwomp to find a control block. Use it to guide the platform to the south across the lava field. Once you're on the other side, take a right. You now need to loop around to the lower left and exit. Hit the exclamation block you find there and bingo – there's your ride to the next area.

Take a right from the next landing to play a game with the Thwomp – Twister Baby Spin into the field of gems and grab at least 30. This is easy, and doing so means the Thwomp will help you hit the red exclamation block.

Thankfully, the blue exclamation block is right there on the next landing. Hit it and climb back onto the Thwomp. Now get ready, because the next stop is a showdown with Bowser(s)!

Either Bowser is particularly vulnerable to Ice Flowers, which can do up to 100 points of damage. Bowser himself is a bit of a beast, though. Between the Prince healing him, his sneaky blasts of fire and the showers of rock, you'll likely to have your hands full during this fight. The Prince himself is a bit of a punk.

SHROOB MOTHERSHIP (PAST)

This is defended by fierce Guardian Shroobs, but it's a straightforward area with no real secrets or puzzles, until you get to the west side of the saucer. At that point, use the springboard to send the babies up top. The flying exclamation block only works if you shine a light on it. You'll need to chase it down, illuminate it and hit it to raise the bridge over the spikes, and then to lower the local barriers.

Once you've done that, you'll have a clear run at the mothership's bridge, where you can sit back and absorb all the plot that's on offer.

TOAD TOWN (PAST)

Restock at the shop and then check out the house that's marked on your map. Drill underneath its gate, climb the stairs and take the bridge over the wall. Stay underground here so you can avoid all the enemies and find the dual blocks in this area. Bring the adults to the other side of the wall and then activate the blocks.

At this point, you have to split up the adults and the babies. This means you need to navigate both separate halves of the town and reunite the crew at the second set of dual blocks. Activating these will take you on to…



STAR HILL (PAST)

You'll hit a dead end early on. Send the babies to stand on the steel plate, flatten them and slide them in through the crawlspace. Spin Jump into the updraft to send the babies flying and send them to the top left. Go through the grate and use the warp block, then continue upward.

This will involve contending with the Shroob-omb, which is more like a game of badminton – albeit to the death – than anything else. Hammer the Shroob-omb back at its Support Shroob staff whenever they attempt to hurl it at you, and defeat the middle and right-hand Shroobs to roll the Shroob-omb back at the Commander Shroob. This will drive him onto the battlefield and allow you to pummel him, although it'll take quite a while to take him down. Red Shells are an excellent choice here.



STAR SHRINE (PAST)

Head either left or right, and then go up one level. The star paths that connect the higher platforms indicate where you can successfully Spin Jump. Use that technique to traverse either area and reach the room where the Aurora Block is being kept.

Send the babies up on the left spring platform and fill Baby Mario, then Spin Jump into the cogwheel. When the Aurora Block falls, spit on it to knock it to the other platform, then drop down and spring back up on that area. Hit the block to knock it down to ground level, then double jump and punch it to send it to the gate area. Backtrack there to gain access to the warp pipe.



Mario's comedy Luigi hat was guaranteed to break the ice at parties.



On each of the subsequent platforms, taken in an anticlockwise direction:

- Punch the Star Block.
- Have the babies navigate the darkened chamber while Mario and Luigi hit the Shine Block for them.
- Punch the Star Block.
- Toss the babies up into the star-shaped doorway. They must hit the blue blocks in this room so that they match the pattern generated on the exterior floor. Doing so will throw the Star Block out into the open.
- Punch the Star Block.

You must connect the starlight beams directly for them to stay lit. For example, you must hit 1, then 4 to generate and maintain the red beam. Lighting all five beams will reveal a warp pipe in the centre of the map, accessible from 5.

Use the pipe to access the Shrine itself. It's a straight line until just after you meet Toadbert and Kylie. After that, leave the room by going north and take a left. Flatten the babies and send them through the maze – your goal is the grate. Inside, they'll find a wall switch, so hammer it to extend a platform on the right side of the room. Now you can Spin Jump up this improvised staircase to reach the Shrine's central area. Hit the floor panel and you'll wind up fighting the Elder Shrooboid.

This can be tough because he's got tons of HP, he likes to use that crystal trap trick you might have seen back in Toad Town, and he throws fireballs too. You'll have to use Ice Flowers to lower his stats and then wade into him with your hammers and shells.

When you've done roughly 1,700 damage, the Elder Shrooboid will sprout back up, along with a flying saucer that has a four-round timer. You need to deflect the Shrooboid's spiked balls into the saucer to reset the timer, otherwise, when it runs out, it's game over.

PEACH'S CASTLE (PRESENT)

You'll find the professor here. Talk to him and then prepare yourself for the final level…

SHROOB CASTLE (PAST)

Once the door is open, head straight north and toss the babies onto the ledge by the shine block. Navigate the spike maze – you'll need to hit an exclamation block to lower part of the path – and hit the wall switch on the balcony. Doing this will lure the exclamation block out of the statue. Punch it to raise a bridge.

Once you've crossed the bridge, you'll find a closed gate. Drill underneath it, hit the wall switch and then enter the open door. Warp through the pipe and you'll wind up in a maze. Navigate through the corridors to hit the dual blocks, thus activating the lasers and freeing the exclamation block in the centre of the maze. You won't be able to reach the top two lasers just yet, but don't worry – you don't have to get to them now.

Hit the central exclamation block to open the gate, then go north and use the warp pipe. You'll wind up on the castle's second floor, so cut through the library and use the hole in the wall to reach the observatory tower. Use the Ball Bros technique to race upstairs, then hit the floor panel to enter the mothership. Play the mini-game to destroy all the saucers, thus clearing the bridge on the second floor.

Now take the bridge and head to the warp pipes to the northwest. The pipe on the left will take you to a new floor of the castle – take a right and you'll go south. Spin Jump and Baby Spin onto the central column, then Baby Spin to the northern balcony and hit the switch. You can now Spin Jump to the exclamation block on the left-hand column and raise the platform on the balcony. Hammer the new switch, head north a room and activate the dual blocks you'll find there. Now go north again and use the warp pipe.

In the sewers, go right, flatten the babies and hop up into the wall. Run left along the fans until you reach the last one, then hover there while the adults Spin Jump into the cogwheel.



Discovering the golden leaf of holly. It's made of chocolate and metal foil.



Bash the mint to make a polar bear appear. It's truly astonishing.



By bashing the block, you flush the royal toilets in a different time zone.

MARIO & LUIGI PARTNERS IN TIME

Finish the game in record time

TIP: GOOMBAS
Goombas will simply rush you down. They're easy enough to dodge, but quite tricky to counter.

TIP: BOOS
Boos usually attack by appearing behind Mario or Luigi.

TIP: KNOCKOUTS
If there are two characters in your group and one gets KOed, the other will pick him up before the enemies attack. This'll slow him down dramatically, making him much more likely to get hit. Use 1UP Mushrooms as fast as possible when a character gets KOed.

Hustle right from here and you should reach a springboard. Bounce up and hit the wall switch.

Tornado Baby Spin across the spikes and down to the floor, then leave and hit the exclamation block to lower the drawbridge. Backtrack with the adults and cross that drawbridge, then toss the babies into the tree stump. Load the cannon and fire it with the switch in the stump. Now bring the babies over and Baby Spin them east across the spikes. Activate the dual blocks and step on the floor panel.

In a new part of the sewers, head east until the Chomp devours the exclamation block. Now go and hit the four Star Blocks so the laser they generate will smack the Chomp. Four hits will level it. Go back and hit the exclamation block and you'll see that you're out of the sewers.

You're behind the gate in the castle's maze. Send the babies through the crate and up onto the balconies to open the northwestern door. This will allow you to activate the final set of dual blocks and shatter the forcefield on the warp pipe. That pipe will take you to the bottom of the stairs to the final battle. Heal up, rearrange Badges and prepare for the showdown!

To drop the mothership, shoot the smaller saucers so they fly into it. Four hits should do the trick. Now go back downstairs to face Princess Shroob. When she's seated, dodge her lasers and smash attack, and retaliate with aerial Bros Items like Smash Eggs. Once her shield's broken, pound her with Red Shells. She's offensively weak when she's grounded, so dodge her bolts and bounce off her Stars.

It's not over yet, though. In your next battle, you have to use the Princess's stars to knock as many saucers out of the air as possible – the fewer saucers there are, the fewer offensive options your opponent has. She's nowhere near as tough as Princess Shroob, though, and most of her attacks are easily evaded.

In her second form, use a Mix Flower to obliterate her tentacles and feet, then attack her crown with aerial weapons and jumps. You can only target the crown when the feet are gone, and you can only do real damage to her head while the crown's destroyed. Save all your Mix Flowers for this fight – you'll need them to keep her tentacles and feet down.

Once she's destroyed, it's really all over bar the shouting. There's one more fight – sort of – but you've effectively completed *Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time*. Congratulations!





LOL!



TIMEWARP

With Mark Green





THE FAMILY TREE

The sordid history of today's biggest games.

Rainbow's ends

We'll soon to be able to buy a ticket back to Rainbow Islands on DS, so here's the full and illustrious history of the game...

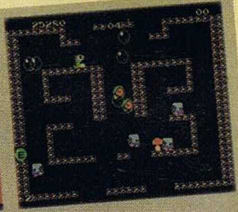


CHACK 'N POP (1983)
A ceiling-clambering platformer with *Bubble Bobble* enemies like Purple Oyster-Blob (our name).

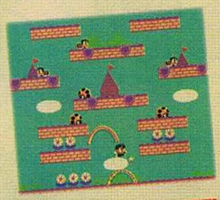


THE FAIRYLAND STORY (1985)
Bubble Bobble ancestor where dinosaurs are fairies and bubbles are delicious cream cakes.





BUBBLE BOBBLE (1986)
Legendary "journey to the cave of monsters", with simple bubble-bursting brilliance that betrays a ton of brilliant secrets, cuddly pixels that still look great, and music we know we'll be humming in our grave.



RAINBOW ISLANDS (1987)
Rainbows, fruit and a tune more infectious than bird flu – it's a timeless classic.



BUST-A-MOVE (1994)
Addictive and unashamedly cheerful bubble-matching puzzle classic starring Bub and Bob. Ready... GO!

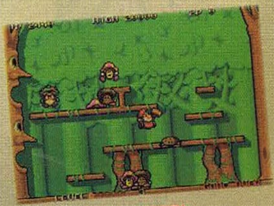




PARASOL STARS (1991)
The 'forgotten' Bub and Bob game. No one seems quite sure if *Parasol Stars* was an actual arcade game before it floated prettily over to home systems. What everyone can agree on is that it contained at least 500% of everyone's recommended daily allowance of Vitamin Cute and Vitamin Weird, with the twins using umbrellas to throw trumpets, lions and ducks living in plant pots.

Like its Taito trilogy stablemates, this game was cute, but not soft – big characters on relatively small maps meant it was easy to get your head squished by a bouncing accordion, or get killed while greedily gobbling up row upon row of irresistible hidden fruit.

Parasol Stars was unquestionably brilliant, though – another bizarre but brilliant idea married to level design that would make Shigsy's eyes glow green. And the music? In true Taito style, you had to repeatedly slam your head in a vice if you wanted to get it the hell out of your brain.



DON DOKO DON (1989)
The blueprint for *Parasol Stars*, starring twin hammering Father Christmas lookalikes. Called Bob and Jim.

Gaming Family Trees, A Definitive Guide 1015

RETRO NEWS

News rounded up from the wild world of retrogaming.

PIXEL ART

Held last May to coincide with the annual E3 gamestravaganza in Los Angeles, 'i am 8-bit' clumped together 100 pieces of artwork inspired by games of old.

If you couldn't spring the $1,000 air fare to make it to the exhibition, don't cry – it's been made into a book. Launching in April, it will feature every bit of artwork shown at the event – including naked Peach! Also, 18th April to 19th May sees the sequel to the original show, with 100 new pieces of game-inspired clay, cloth and canvas on display in LA.

■ www.iam8bit.net

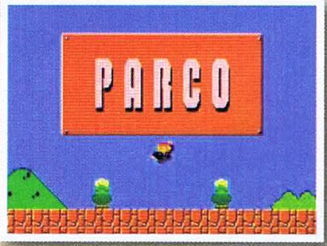


DOT TO DOT

These days, Nintendo isn't shy about lending Japanese companies its most famous old pixels. So it's no surprise to see 150 brown, red and orange pixels worth of plumber on the prowl again, this time to advertise Japanese department store chain Parco.

Its website has been decked out in Mario finery, the Tokyo subway has the *Super Mario Bros* gang hanging menacingly from the ceiling, and there's even a TV ad that shows Mazza in a suit, racing down to Parco to buy a potted plant. We think.

■ www.parco.co.jp/parco/gb06w



64 IN 16

It's hard to believe that *Super Mario 64* is already a decade old, and that people are still managing to find new ways to complete it in record-fast time. This month's completion video by 'Spezzafer' shaves another couple of minutes off the 'tool-assisted' record – basically, going back and re-recording when things go wrong, creating what's essentially a stitched together composite of thousands of short pixel-perfect moments. The entire game is battered into submission by Spezzafer in just over 16 minutes – the man is a legend.

■ http://bisqwit.iki.fi/nesvideos



NET TENDO

NINTENDOPERA



We were really trying to avoid talking about The Mario Opera (www.the-mario-opera.com). Yes, LA art student Jonathan Mann and cohorts have turned *Super Mario Bros* into a full operatic nightmare. ("This cavern seems to hold the very meaning of my life, it's scary/ flower's stems flash like a warning/ and I find myself transforming"). But now that someone's gone one step further and turned the opera into a puppet show, it's impossible to ignore. Andrew Lloyd Webber hitting Broadway with Super Mario Kart: The Musical is only a matter of time.

■ http://video.google.com/videosearch?q=mario+opera

FUZZY LOGIC



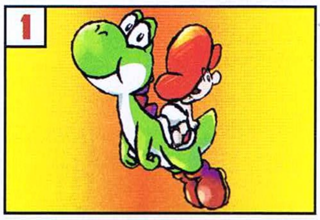
Of course, girls these days are probably too busy tickling their Nintendog under the chin to bother with Barbie, but here's the ultimate accessory for the doll who has everything: a tiny, knitted *Donkey Kong* cabinet. It was sold on eBay this month in kit form – instructions, wool, and, slightly sinisterly, "something a little extra" – and is accurate right down to the coin slots. The complete set, including *Pac-Man*, pinball, a pool table and a 'grabbing machine', went for $13.50 (about £8).

You just know that Ken will turn the volume up too loud, spend all day playing on it, and thus precipitate the inevitable divorce…

FIVE SIDEKICKS

Five of the best ever sidekicks to grace a game, to be precise.

1



YOSHI

The best thing to come out of an egg since our Kinder Surprise aeroplane. Yoshi's always smiling, eats anything, and makes us laugh when he falls down a hole in *Super Mario World*. What more could you want from a sidekick?

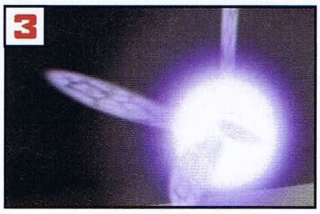
2



HAMSTER

A worm's best friend actually turns out to be a nocturnal rodent. Who'd have thought it, eh? *Earthworm Jim* saw the eponymous annelid riding around on a hamster that would much rather have been at home chewing cardboard.

3



NAVI

Normally we'd have done her with a flyswat for the constant buzzing over our shoulder and that "Hey!". Still, she was invaluable help in *Ocarina of Time*. Except for the graveyard bit that took us eight days to work out. Eight. Long. Days.

4



NATALYA

She more than made up for that joypad-shatteringly tough protection mission in the *GoldenEye* room – mainly by running off into the Cuban jungle and proceeding to Magnum everything that moved. Nice girl.

5



EBISAMARU

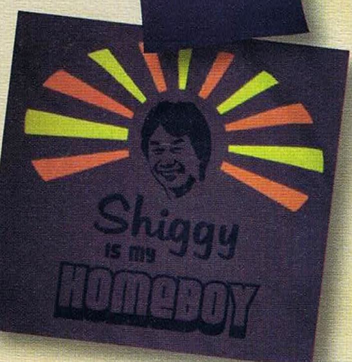
The chubby helper of mad Japanese Edo-era hero Goemon, he's rather fond of taking his clothes off and then running about with his arms flailing in the air like a man whose hair is on fire. Like you do…

RETRO TAT

It's 'Shigsy', surely?

For a while now, the Pong Nation website (www.pongnation.com) has been warmly welcoming retro lovers with a smile that stretches from one side of the browser to the other. Now it has added a range of T-shirts that anyone would be proud to wear snugly on their torso – unless you've got a distended tummy full of Quality Street and Pringles, like us. We like the simple Mario 'shroom, but we're sure all you 'word up' street kids will jump at the chance to make your chest shout "Shiggy Is My Homeboy" or "Mario Is My Beeeyatch".





WRITE IN!

Have you found something that's turned old Nintendo stuff into a new money-spinning gift? Tell us and we'll name and shame it in these very pages. Email ngc@futurenet.co.uk

THIS MONTH IN NINTENDO

This month, seven years ago – **N64 Magazine, March 1999**







△ *Zelda*, Aliens and *Pokémon* combine in this game to create an N64 classic.

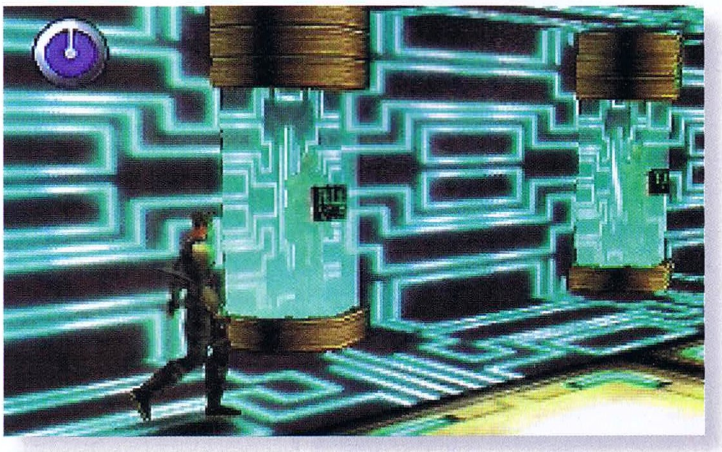
△ Either his foot's just exploded or he's got some strange kind of growth from the knee down...



GAME OF THE MONTH
HYBRID HEAVEN
NINTENDO 64

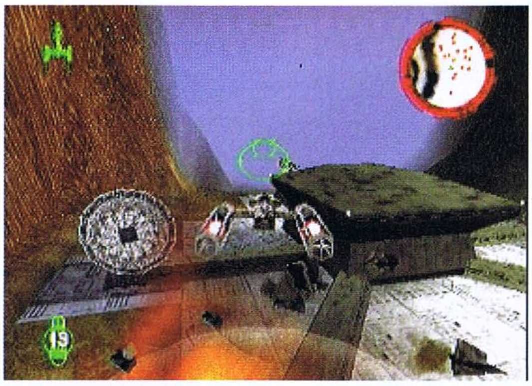
This MGS rival was original, entertaining and criminally overlooked, even though it showed a bit of cheek...

WHAT'S THIS? An adventure/RPG confuseathon from Konami, sort of like a futuristic *Zelda* mixed in with a bit of X-Files and Aliens, and with turn-based combat that owed more than a little to *Pokémon*, of all things.
THE BIG DEAL: Konami had just delivered the world-stopping *Metal Gear Solid* on the original PlayStation, so hopes were high that this would be the N64's *MGS*. It's plot was as twisty-turny as a snake trapped in a U-bend, and the unique combat and level system (limbs would grow in strength individually) blazed with the kind of originality that the N64 attracted in spades. "Huge, unique, compelling and rampantly original... it looks like being every inch as great as we'd hoped," we gushed in a four-page preview, and we ended up handing it a respectable 83% in the review a few issues later.
FROM THE SAME TEAM AS: The atrocious *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* on Gamecube.
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT: Not much. Sales hardly went through the roof and the eBay test of desirability isn't too good: you can pick up a copy for just £3. Might be worth it if you're really desperate to see a digital polygon man coming out of the shower.
AND: *Hybrid Heaven* was one of the only N64 games to feature male nudity, albeit from behind, and with only a glimpse of buttock. Good.



Everyone was playing...

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON N64



△ The game gave you the chance to play the best bits of the movies.

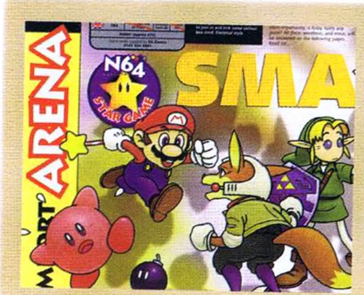


△ *Everyone* wants to experience the thrill of flying an X-Wing...

The force was strong with this game, which let you take part in the Star Wars trilogy's most famous and thrilling battles...

In 1999, Hollywood's most famous beard without a chin was well on the way to ruining his revered trilogy of space operas, with the Special Editions all done and Episode 1 on the way. All of the accompanying media coverage and hype helped to send *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron* to the top of the games chart.

Of course, the game was also a brilliant sky-only combat-'em-up in its own right. Recreating some of the trilogy's best bits – including the mighty Battle of Hoth – and filling in some of the gaps between the movies, it's now best remembered for the Naboo Starfighter cheat that was kept secret for months. How? By naming the code after crazy Swedish guitarist Yngwie Malmsteen. Fact!



OTHER REVIEWS THIS MONTH

Super Smash Bros
Surprise Ninty beat-'em-up released two months after it was announced.
90%

Magical Tetris
Capcom's first game for the N64 – *Tetris* with Mickey Mouse. 'W00t'.
59%

Get A Love: Panda Love Unit
A Japanese dating sim that was so incomprehensible we couldn't rate it.
??%

Worst game...

MILO'S ASTRO LANES NINTENDO 64





Considering the 38% score, Tim's attack on this appalling spacebound bowling game was surprisingly gentle. "It filled us with a sense of impending dread the moment we switched it on," he admitted – which was probably on account of 'zany' characters like an alien with a big head, and tongue-unrollingly stupid ideas like bowling balls splitting into three. Of course, on top of that was play so slow that it warped space/time around it, plus the whole idea of bowling in space.

Crave obviously hasn't learnt its lesson about silly sports, though, as *World Championship Poker* on Gamecube proves.

Other news...

Old news, tastefully repackaged...

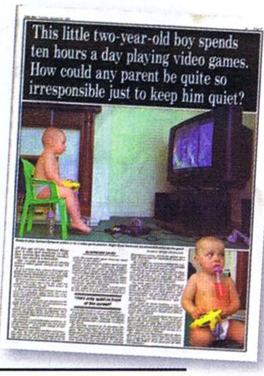


MISSING LINK

NGC staked out game shops to report back from the long-awaited (and long-delayed) launch of *Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, and asked why so few copies were available on the shelves. "We've actually had a child cry when he came in and couldn't get his copy," claimed one store assistant.

BABY BOND

We reported on a gobsmacking story in The Daily Mail newspaper, claiming that a two-year-old in nappies was playing *GoldenEye* for ten hours a day. "Misinformed, judgemental and patronising drivel... the whole story has been warped and abused purely to fit the tabloids' prejudiced agenda," we spat angrily.



GOING POSTAL

Mad mail? You bet. "For the first time in ten years my wife actually understands why I like games so much", "My mum says *Zelda* isn't very good", "Ganondorf shouts 'Ulrika' as he attacks" and "I've noticed that there's a large city in America named after *San Francisco Rush*."

N·GC CLASSICS

Bring back the memories – or fill in the brainholes with new ones.

CLASSIC BOXART

BUBBLE BOBBLE CLASSIC: GAME BOY COLOR (1999)



With the new-look Bub & Bob about to make their return in *Rainbow Islands Revolution* (see page 19), here's how they looked back in their Game Boy Color days. It isn't at all clear what horrific accident has torn the skin off poor Bub's arms, but perhaps it was also responsible for making him a distended, towering dino freak with the 'look into my eyes' gaze of a cheap seaside town hypnotist. And what's the meaning of the mixed-up shadows, or the giant church organ in the background? The artist must be trying to tell us something. "I'm rubbish", probably.

CLASSIC CUTSCENE

MARIO KART 64: N64 (1996)

The three top-placed racers in any MK64 tournament got to stand on the winner's podium – still in their karts, mind – while The Biggest Fish Ever floated overhead. But the funniest thing was that if you failed to place, you'd get to watch from afar, before getting blown up by a wandering Bob-omb. Why didn't those in fourth or below get punished? Probably because Shigsy hates you bad.



CLASSIC COCK-UP

POKÉMON RED/BLUE GAME BOY COLOR (1996)

This has had more conspiracy theories whirl around it than John F Kennedy's exploding head. Surfing up and down the right-hand side of Red/Blue's map would trigger an encounter with 'MISSINGNO', a Pokémon with number '000', the non-existent type 'Bird' and a splodge of random pixels as its battle image. Clearly, it was a bit of safety net coding by Ninty, but that didn't stop gibbering Pokéfreaks surmising that it was some kind of intentional super-secret, and grabbing their own – only to watch their save game get wiped for their trouble.



△ **Mysterious super-Pokémon secret or a bit of code? Either way, it was about as fun to catch as the plague.**

CAREER GRAPH: KAMEK

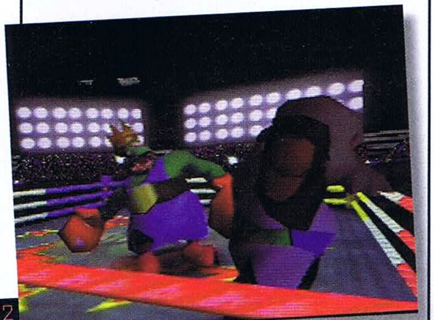
Magician, adoptive father, turtle...





CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH • CAREER GRAPH

CLASSIC BOSS
DONKEY KONG 64: NINTENDO 64 (1989)





Rare was never one to let you finish a game without a fight, and the superb *Donkey Kong 64* climaxed with an absolute belter of a boss battle: a lengthy, five-part boxing match against King K Rool, with a bout for each of the quintet of controllable Kongs. DK barrel-blasted into Rool's belly, Diddy (that's Kong, not P.) jetpacked around the ring, and Tiny shrinky-dinked to whack the croc's toes. A "boxing clever" pun? Actually, we don't mind if we do…





△ The longest track in the game, Big Snowman is also the fastest and most fun.

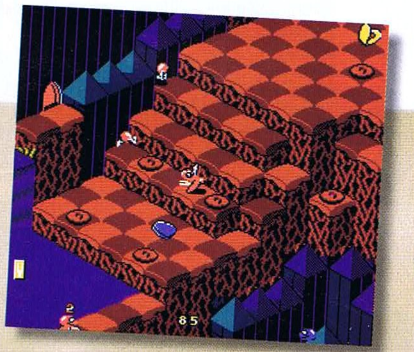


CLASSIC LEVEL
SNOWBOARD KIDS 64
NINTENDO 64 (1997)

We'd like to kiss the Atlus employee who talked his bosses into bringing *Snowboard Kids* back. We banged on about the brilliance of the N64 original for months, but it still got the kind of frosty reception in stores that usually ensures a franchise a quick, permanent death. It's great to see it back, and it gives you the chance to hear us banging on about *Snowboard Kids 64* again!

Big Snowman, the lengthiest of all *Snowboard Kids*' tracks, was the circuit king. This was partly because of its music – an electro anthem that sounded like it was being played underwater, through a thin metal pipe, at ten times its normal speed and pitch – and also because it was crueller than an Antarctic winter. A dense mini forest made piloting a Star Wars speedbike through the Endor Forest look like riding a tortoise across the desert; a corner at the start of lap two was just made to guide you nose-first into the wall; and one curved section tricked you into falling to your death. Every. Single. Time.

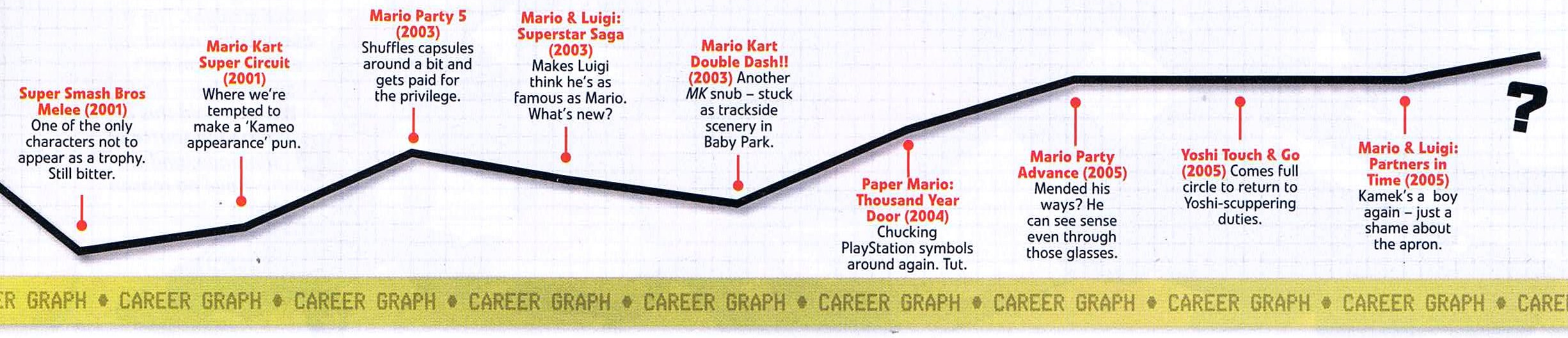
There were huge jumps that gave you the thrill of watching rival racers below you, unaware that you were about to drop a giant saucepan on their heads. But the best thing about Big Snowman was the say-what-you-see track-naming process. Get halfway around the course and there was your great big snowman. Perfect.



LOST CLASSIC
SNAKE RATTLE & ROLL (NES 1991)

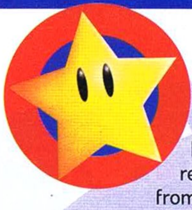


Another Rare naming disaster. The 'clever' bit was that the game's lead snakes were called Rattle and Roll, see? *Sigh.* But that was where amateur hour ended: *Snake Rattle & Roll* oozed brilliance from every TV dot. As Rattle or Roll, you had to gobble up enemies until you were fat enough to tip the scales at the end of each level. The stunning looks were a double-edged sword, though– the NES D-Pad was as good at diagonal pseudo-3D as it was at doing the washing up. All the same, *Snake, Rattle & Roll* wasn't to be 'hissed'. As in 'missed'. Ahem.



30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX



STAR LETTER

If you send us the best letter of the month, you'll receive a shiny new Gamecube (or GBA/DS) game from our bulging sack of shiny new games. Lovely.



"Potentially endless"

Having enjoyed the asphalt-liquidising delights of *Mario Kart DS* since its release in November, the amount of content in the game got me thinking. 36 karts and 32 tracks is a huge number – certainly enough to keep us all going for a bit – and Nintendo has helped us all become true individuals thanks to the inclusion of the fantastic Emblem Editor.

Even so, everything about that game, and most games (excluding the likes of *Animal Crossing*), is still finite. The Emblem Editor is the only part that can conceivably be remade and restarted over and over in countless variations.

Cue Revolution. It's set to be Wi-Fi enabled, of course, and this access to the internet opens up new possibilities. What if Nintendo created a *Mario Kart* game where the player was given the chance to make their own tracks and karts? Maybe even characters? By using their Wi-Fi connection as a way to beam this content to and fro, the game would effectively last forever. The Track Editor could contain all kinds of tools, such as road tiles, grass, dirt, pavement, classic Mario obstacles and perhaps even a Texture Editor so everything is truly unique. The Revolution's controller could be used to drag and drop items where they need to go. Maybe Nintendo could even implement a system whereby the polygons of the obstacles or track tiles could be twisted and morphed using the controller. It could also be used as a kind of light-pen, so you could draw textures on the screen in the Texture Editor.

Similar interfaces could be used for the Kart and Character Editors. Want to make a monster truck or *Grim Fandango*-style hot-rod? Do it! Want to give Waluigi a neck like a giraffe? Go there! Drag and drop, point and click, turn and twist. Can you imagine how clumsy that kind of an editor would be on a conventional controller?

Mario Kart, or any of Nintendo's franchises for that matter, can become infinite if Revolution's connectivity and interface can be utilised correctly. Let the gamers help make the games. All Nintendo has to do is monitor what goes to and fro and make sure there are no karts made of bosoms or anything unsavoury like that.

Yes, it all sounds a bit like Will Wright's 'Spore' thing, but if we could make our own tracks and karts then surely the Revolution *Mario Kart* will be potentially endless.

Tony White, Wells

***Sounds intriguing. I think a lot of people (well, me) would find it tricky to design unique* Mario Kart *tracks and characters using only a wand and a couple of buttons, but it's a great idea.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

Does anybody on your mag support Norwich City FC?
Adam Paul, Norwich
***Tom East did, for reasons best known to himself.* Ed**

www.qwantz.com/posterchild. It teaches you how to make a Mario question block! Don't ask me how I found it…
Thom Peacock, via email
***Nice. If anyone tries it, send us the pics.* Ed**

I almost blew up (metaphorically speaking).
Sean Greenhill, via email
***Glad to hear it.* Ed**

Yesterday I took my DS to school and my greatest fear became true.
Craenen Kai, Belgium
***You'd forgotten to put your trousers on?* Ed**

Mario is allergic to peas.
Luke Anderson, Alton
***And bullets.* Ed**

I truly trust Nintendo in everything it does, even the Game Boy Micro.
Tom Cooper, Gloucester
***That's admirable.* Ed**

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us at…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your name and address so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!

"Source of truth"

I have been a huge fan of yours since issue 13 of N64 Magazine, but it saddens me to think that my first published letter to you could be one of complaint. When I received issue 115, I was overjoyed to find the front cover boasting new details on *Zelda: Twilight Princess* and, of course, the title "Revolution launch date revealed". I skipped quickly to the section entitled Twilight Revolution and learned that the game would be getting a revolutionary twist, in that it would be able to use the Revolution controller when played through that console.

I rushed to the Zeldauniverse forums to discuss this info with my contemporaries. I was surprised to find that few others believed me, and when asked to prove your magazine's trustworthiness, I told people of your long-standing history as a source of truth and that you would never print unproven rumours as truths. So I argued, and other NGC fans came to back me up. We all vouched for your honesty.

A couple of weeks later, after it all had died down, the Zeldauniverse team reported that Nintendo had dismissed these claims as speculation. Needless to say, NGC is no longer a trusted name among non-readers on the site.

I was wondering how you came about the information in the first place. I don't want to believe that your writers would print their own guesswork and sell it as the truth, and although I agree that the possibility of that information being true is still quite likely, as I myself had guessed it was possible a few months ago, I'd rather not have to defend your honour based on non-factual information ever again. Keep it real, homes!

Robino DX, Bristol

We've received loads of similar letters, and it hasn't escaped our attention that many internet sites have debunked our story based on Nintendo's carefully worded statement (which, if you decode the PR-speak, actually boils down to them saying 'no comment'). So we'd like to set the record straight. The story about Zelda appearing on Revolution isn't speculation – it's fact. We were told this by a trusted source at Nintendo, and we have no reason



***to doubt it. We understand why Nintendo issued its statement – after all, this news wasn't supposed to break until the E3 show in May – but we're 100% accurate when we assure you that* Twilight Princess *will be a Revolution title.* Ed**

"Balls"

It felt like I'd been kicked in the balls when a guy in my class traded in his DS and got a PSP. I don't particularly like him, but it's handy to have someone to get your Nintendog to meet. So, I took to single-player games. I was so blown away by *Lost in Blue* and *Kirby Power Paintbrush* that I actually forgot to have another re-run of *Resi 4*.

Then *Mario Kart* reared its oh-so-beautiful head. I red-shelled, I inked and I bombed – but not alone. Wi-Fi is just so beautiful! I found myself racing some French dude called Pierre in my local restaurant and leaving my parents to heave the shopping around while I dipped into a 'five-minute' race that lasted an hour.

I wasn't all that bothered about getting broadband before, but now that I've experienced the sheer exhilaration of racing online against unknown foes, I can't stop! The hotspots are a credit to Nintendo. I was terrified that I wouldn't have access to any at all, but the BT deal has really opened up my sexy silver handheld, and all for free!

Steven Flannery, via email

***Yep. Wi-Fi is a true marvel.* Ed**



"Wish list"

Why am I seeing so many fantastic games being cancelled? *Mario 128*, probably the most wanted Nintendo game ever, has just been cancelled. *Animal Crossing 2* has just been cancelled. Why? For me, even those two are too many, as they were at the top of my wish list. These two games would probably have brought Nintendo more money than the rest of the year's games put together. What will be next? *Twilight* Princess being cancelled?

Matthew Duffell, Chorley

Bonus Letters

The story starts on a nice Sunday when I was about seven years old. A boy from the neighbour's came to us. "Would you like to buy a Nintendo?" "But what is that?" "It's the Nintendo Entertainment System!" "WOW!"
Jarkko Peltoniemi, Finland
***Happy days.* Ed**

Make this a bonus letter.
Spencer Greenwood, Fleet
***Job done.* Ed**

I decided to look through my old issues of NGC and was appalled. You totally underrated *Starfox Adventures*.
Colin Tosh, Manchester
Hey! Welcome to 2006, Colin.

You slice your controller through the air and Ganondorf is in pieces. How cool is that?
Sinna Ahonen, Finland
***Very.* Ed**

The death of the N64 was like the fall of the Roman Empire.
David Yarrow, via email
***But without the bloodbaths and orgies.* Ed**

Now I've told you how I feel, please prove to us your wife is real.
Alice Young, via email
***Erm…* Ed**



***As far as I'm aware,* Mario 128 *was just a Nintendo codename for the next* Mario *project, much like Dolphin and Nitro were the codenames for Gamecube and DS. You'll see it (or parts of it) on Revolution, and the same goes for the next* Animal Crossing *game.* Ed**

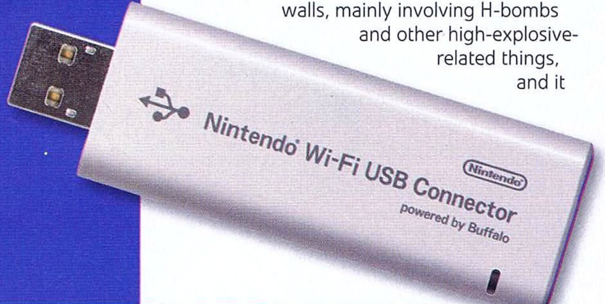
"Bollards"

When Reggie announced that Nintendo was releasing a DS Wi-Fi service, I thought, "Brilliant!" And when Nintendo announced that it would all be free, I exclaimed, "Genius!"

Alas! It all turned out to be a load of bollards, for what Nintendo clearly meant to say was that it was releasing a DS Wi-Fi service and that it would only be free if you had already bought the necessary equipment.

I bought my DS, followed shortly by *Mario Kart*, and discovered that you must have previously paid for a wireless router to use Nintendo's completely free Wi-Fi service. If you don't have one, you must be punished for your unacceptable ignorance by paying for a fairly non-free £30 Nintendo DS Wi-Fi USB connector. I was willing to make this sacrifice, because 30 quid is just about fair enough, but when I got home and opened it up, I saw, to my horror, the words "…can be installed on a PC running the Windows XP operating system".

At this point, it all proved too much for my poor biodegradable brain. Many emotions and thoughts ricocheted around on its inside walls, mainly involving H-bombs and other high-explosive-related things, and it



CORRECTION CORNER

Oops, you did it again. Well, not specifically this, but anyway. On page 8 of issue 115, at the bottom of the Nintendo Difference column, is a screenshot of *Luigi's Mansion*, with the caption: "No tutorial's are needed…" Why the apostrophe on tutorials? Is it possessive? In which case, to whom do the tutorials belong? Is it short for 'tutorial is'? That sentence makes no sense. Bring back the Big Stick!
Luke Bowyer, Cheshire

Indeed. Sorry.



Do you lot still hate Rare for leaving Nintendo? Issue 114 seems to suggest that you do, seeing that you gave Vivendi credit for making the legendary *GoldenEye* in your *From Russia With Love* review…
David Morrish

Oops.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Dave Bowes, via email; DJ Fryer, *(see http://teletextgames.proboards3.com/index.cgi?board=ot&action=display&thread=1134555991 for the correct link to that game from last month. Hopefully)*; Richard Montgomery, via email; Simon Green, Woking; Ben Dormand, Sidmouth; Jack Sargeant, Cheshire; Luke Bowyer, Cheshire; Joel Summerfield, Cambridge; Charlie McDonnell, Bath; Caspar Eliot, Bath; Eddie Simmonds, via email; Sam Harby, Sheffield; Matthew Jones, Wrexham; Charlie Porter, Manchester; Gordon Roberts, via email; Neil Campbell, via email; Joe Hodges, via email. And everyone else. Cheers!

just got funnier and funnier every time I read those words. In fact, I thought Nintendo's sense of humour was so delicious, it gave me a hilarious idea of where to shove that USB connector.

Oh, and if you hadn't guessed, no, I don't have a PC running the Windows XP operating system, because I find nothing wrong with owning Windows 2000. So do I now have to fork out for the wonderful Windows XP operating system, or can you offer any alternative suggestions?
Jonathan Barron, via email

Hey, you're lucky – I don't even have the option of forking out for Windows XP, since I use a Mac. Of course, you could always do what I did and get a refund on the USB dongle thing.

For not much more than £30, you can then buy a wireless router that will do the same job on any operating system – plus you won't have to start up your PC every time you want to play. Ed



"Bad idea"

I am very sad because the new *Zelda* will arrive close to the end of 2006 and Nintendo has chosen to throw Revolution control into the game. While I think the game won't be overlooked by gamers this way, and sales of Revolution will go through the roof, I still think it's a bad idea.

The new *Zelda* was never meant to be controlled with the pointer and I don't think it will be a good example of what can be done with the new controller. Just look at *Mario 64 DS* – you said that the touch screen control wasn't that good because the game was meant to be controlled with the analogue stick.
Henrie van Meurs, Holland

If Zelda will propel Revolution sales 'through the roof' then how can it possibly be a bad idea? If Nintendo releases it on Gamecube in November, it will sell next to nothing. Ed

"Omelette"

First of all, the comment in your Zelda feature (issue 115) about the Revolution teaser trailer and the two chefs. The chef on the right isn't supposed to be riding anything – he's tossing a pan of something, hence the sizzling noise. Seems like a difficult mistake to make. Or is Nintendo planning to make a horseback cookery game like *Mario Equestrian: Toadstool Omelette* or something?



Besides making you feel stupid, I've also got a thought to share, which came to me while reading the caption about capturing stuff with the controller. You mention carrying and scooping water, but what if Link had to carry a big jug of water from A to B? To keep the water from spilling, you'd have to keep holding the controller upright while still trying to move around and fight like normal. This is just a small idea, but it would certainly be interesting.
Will Havercroft, via email

First of all, you're absolutely correct. And despite making me feel stupid, I think that's an excellent idea. Ed

"Excited"

After reading your exclusive Revolution/*Zelda* story, I have to say that I'm looking forward to November even more, knowing that two of the greatest things in the gaming world will finally be released. Now I can't say I'm not disappointed that there's a further delay

CREATIVE CORNER

This month's top arts and crafts masterpieces...



"Knives"

This is why we don't sell knives to under-16s.
Helen McCartney, Co Durham

And that's an astonishingly good piece of art. Get busy, Creative Corner people – the bar appears to have been raised.



to *Twilight Princess*, but from the screenshots, it looks like it is going to be worth the wait. Also, is it only me or does the fact that it will have features compatible with the Revolution make you more excited? I mean, no *Zelda* game disappoints, it's as simple as that. Just releasing it on Gamecube would probably have given us the best game ever, but this will open it up to new fans, something I'm sure Nintendo is delighted about.

It's also a genius idea from the mind of Shigeru Miyamoto. The Revolution will be the cheapest next-gen console, and a lot more people will be attracted to Nintendo. These two amazing products will revolutionise gaming and I for one can't wait. Roll on November!
Alex Catena, Aylesbury

You are Reggie Fils-Aime, and I claim my £10. Ed

"Sword katas"

Here's an idea for a possible use of the Revolution controller for *Twilight Princess*: how about a massive underground multi-levelled dungeon, one that isn't linked to the main quest. To go deeper into the dungeon you have to learn and perform a series of martial art-style sword katas, which get progressively more complex. They involve moving around the room and performing blocks, swipes and punches.

You learn them on your own, and when you perform them, enemies appear and attack from the points where the particular kata was geared around. By the last, deepest level, you're defending and counterattacking against hundreds of enemies,



preferably to beat-heavy music and in a white hall. How magnificent would this look to your mum as she walks into your room?

The final prize for the dungeon could be an item worth nothing to you, but invaluable to a certain NPC. When given this item, it starts off a series of errands on a Biggoronsword-style mini-quest. Oh yes.
Autonova, Hereford

For those of you who don't know, a kata is a sequence of movements used in martial arts. Thank you, Google. Ed

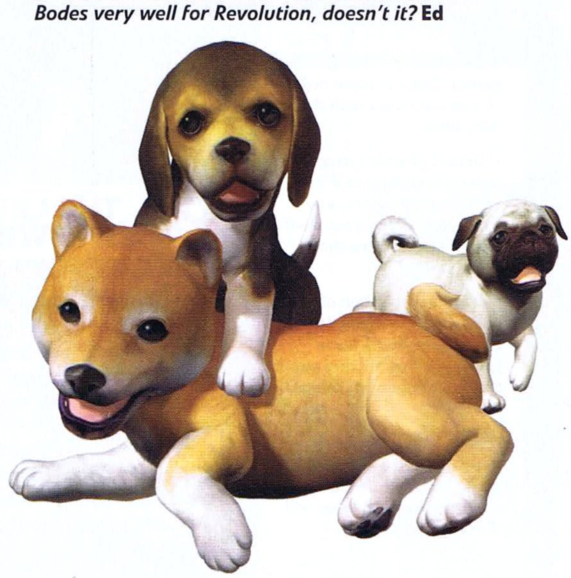
"More than"

Here's an interesting fact for you to brood over. I've asked over 10 of my friends who think the DS is rubbish exactly what it is about it that they hate so much. Guess what the answer was? "The touch screen is pointless, the stylus is rubbish, why does it need two screens?"

My answer was simple. For the touch screen and stylus, I showed them *Power Paintbrush* and *Nintendogs*. For the dual screen, I showed them *Sonic Rush*. Oh, and to ram the Wi-Fi down their throats, I showed them *Mario Kart*.

My point is that for every jealous remark anti-DS fans give, there's always a game that proves the DS to be much more than the sum of its parts. It's a fact that the DS outsells the PSP because of the innovative games it has.
Matt Jones, via email

As Nintendo predicted, DS and PSP have separate markets – if you buy one, you're probably not interested in the other. Since late last year, DS has been outselling PSP by a colossal margin, so we all know which market turned out to be the more lucrative. Bodes very well for Revolution, doesn't it? Ed



"Small errors"

As I was reading your *Pokémon XD Gale Of Darkness* 100% Capture Success Guide (issue 114), I realised there were some errors in the spellings. Delicatty should be Delcatty; Lovedisc is actually Luvdisc; Houndoon is Houndoom; Flaffy is Flaaffy; Griafarig is Girafarig; Pigeotto is Pidgeotto; Alteria is Altaria; Likitung is Lickitung; SableEye is Sableye; Manetric is Manectric; and Kangashan is Kangaskhan.
Katarina Soelvberg Mo, Norway

I'd blame it on the fact that the guide was written by an American, but that probably won't impress you. Bah. Ed

SO TELL ME THIS...
Wisdom contained (inexplicably) in a box

Every time I try to play online through my wireless router, the game always freezes up after 10 minutes (exactly 10 minutes every single time) and then I get an error code of 94030. I've tried a number of different settings for the router and even called Nintendo, but the problem is still there.
Dave Leonard, via email

It could be that you've got some kind of security setting, such as MAC filtering, on your router, which is causing it to drop the connection. Try completely resetting the router and put the DS's MAC address into the list of 'allowed' connections. If that doesn't work, maybe you could test out a different router. If the same thing happens, the problem may lie with your broadband ISP instead.

1. I've noticed some of the Twilight Princess screenshots show a Hint/Z-button icon on the lower centre of the screen. Any idea if this can be made to disappear? I for one don't want it.
2. Who's the female singer you can hear on some of the music in F-Zero GX (such as the Mrs Arrow theme)? I think she's got a really good singing voice.
Stuart Wybrow, via email

1. It's there all the time in the versions we've played.
2. Much searching produced no result. Anybody?

1. Will there ever be a sequel to Pokémon Snap released?
2. Can you, at any relevant point, bring back the "Write You Are!" section? I always found it amusing reading reviews of a 60%-rated Zelda 64 or a 99%-rated Body Harvest.
3. Will Too Human receive a release on Revolution?
4. When is the projected release for the Game Boy: Generation 4?
Matthew Cassar, Herts

1. No.
2. Will do. Start sending us your reviews, folks – no more than 200 words each.
3. No.
4. None as yet.

1. Once you complete the Grand Prix on Mario Kart DS, and you can use any kart, is there any point in picking different characters?
2. You said there was going to be a conventional pad to go with Revolution to accommodate games made for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360. Is there any chance of getting a glimpse of it?
TJ Trott, via email

1. Supposedly there's a slight difference in handling, although you probably have to use your imagination to detect it.
2. Nintendo will show it at E3 in May.



NGC TOP 100

THE BEST GAMECUBE GAMES YOUR MONEY CAN BUY…

WHY YOU NEED IT!



Your up-to-date guide to the hottest PAL titles

Games aren't cheap. Even when you buy pre-owned games, it's still a bit gutting to get your bargain treasure home and find you've splashed out on a box of gaming garbage. Hence this buyer's guide! It's got:

- **Our 100 top-scoring games, listed in score order so you can begin with the very best.**
- **Details of which issue it was reviewed in, so if you want to know more, you can look through your back issues. You *do* have them, don't you…?**
- **A brief description of each game, so if you don't have the relevant back issue, you can still find out the most important things about it.**
- **Highlighted games, which go into a little more detail. As the list gets updated, the highlights will also change.**

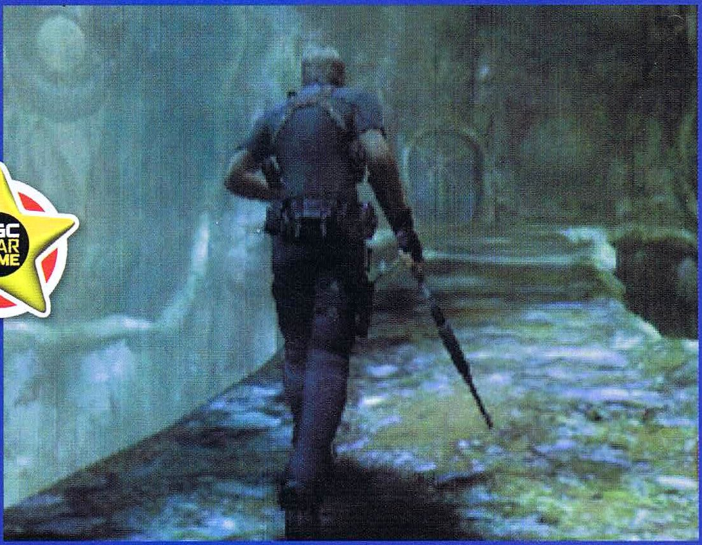


1 RESIDENT EVIL 4 — 97

CAPCOM ■ NGC/104

What, no zombies? What's going on? Something spectacular, that's what. This instalment takes the *Resi* series to the next level, with an unprecedented level of innovation. Gone are the three-day-long animations of doors opening and in comes this new, far more dynamic game.

NGC STAR GAME











2 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/81

The babbling of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when this hit the shelves. It's as exquisitely fashioned as a Pixar flick and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some sailing sections spoil it a bit, but this is as close to art as games have got.

NGC STAR GAME







3 METROID PRIME — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/76

Looks absolutely incredible and there's no slowdown, despite the huge, incredibly detailed environments. The action is varied and the puzzles are mind-bending. One of the finest games you'll ever play.

NGC STAR GAME



4 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Yet again Mario shows other platform 'heroes' how it's really done – in stunning 3D, with responsive controls and an engaging story about vandalism and poisonous brown slime. Plus a giant water-filled squirty backpack. It's everything you never knew you always wanted.







5 METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES — 94

NINTENDO ■ NGC/101

Another outstanding outing for Samus Aran as she switches between dimensions to save the Luminoth from the Ing. The story is enriched by the logs you find, and Samus has useful new weapons and abilities. The landscapes aren't as varied and awe-inspiring as *Prime's*, but that's our only complaint.



6 MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! — 93

NINTENDO ■ NGC/88

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and pick-up boxes, bizarre weapons from slippery bananas to green shells, giant Yoshi eggs, and all your favourite Ninty faces doubling up to race recklessly. The AI's a bit cheaty (a shell *just* as we're about to win? Hmm…) but it's a whole lot of fun.







7 F-ZERO GX — 92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/85

This is a blisteringly fast racer that manages to keep up the pace without getting framerate jitters. You'll never accept glitchy graphics again. A few more tracks would have been nice, but with editable vehicles (in addition to the 30+ that come with the game) and a Story mode, why complain?



8 PIKMIN 2 — 92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Louie, Olimar's assistant, has shown himself to be less than efficient at managing the business. Happily, it means they've had to return to Earth for a longer session of collecting treasure, along with two new types of Pikmin to help them. Bigger, better and even more enjoyable than the original.







9 SOUL CALIBUR 2 — 91

NAMCO ■ NGC/85

Excellent, fast-paced fighting. Weapon Master mode is your key to unlocking the eight hidden characters, but the real star of the show isn't hidden. Namco has dropped in Link for the Gamecube version, complete with bow and arrow. It's the best fighting game on *any* system.



10 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/73

Travel back through time on the trail of the nefarious 'Splitters. This means shooting things. A lot. Your weapons are time-zone appropriate, letting you wage war everywhere from the Wild West to the near future. The Multiplayer mode is the icing on the cake. You'll love every second of this.





TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2
Cute-looking turn-based strategy with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

2 WARIO WARE TWISTED!
Takes the template laid down by *Wario Ware*, then adds a tilt-sensitive cartridge. You'll play it until you're sick.

3 WARIO WARE
Imagine the simple graphics and gameplay of Game & Watch fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep coming back to.

4 MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA
An RPG with puzzle and platform elements, starring our two top plumbers.

5 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
Undoubtedly one of the most memorable outings for Link (alongside *Ocarina of Time*). Comes with bonus *Four Swords* multiplayer adventure.

6 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level design ever.

7 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
It's the same as before – catch 'em all and send 'em into battle – but it's still the most entertaining RPG ever.

8 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
Nabs the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions and, if you've got four friends, GBAs and cables, they can play too.

9 METROID FUSION/ ZERO MISSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found in these two games: a sprawling environment littered with enemies and an imposing level of difficulty.

10 GUNSTAR FUTURE HEROES
Treasure makes old-school shooting seem like the freshest thing on earth.

DIRECTORY

The best Gamecube games around

11 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE — 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

All your Nintendo favourites get together for a phenomenal ruck across a whole range of game worlds. Think Samus could beat Mario? Or that three Jigglypuffs are better than one Link? You'll have ludicrous amounts of fun proving it, by yourself or with friends.

12 HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE — 91

UBISOFT ■ NGC/91

Romance the ladies, keep cows and grow veggies as the seasons change. Despite a new chapter structure, this farm sim loses its way a little when you've got your bride and have few new goals apart from hybridising crops. Well, such is life, but at least you get to do a bit of milking.

13 HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN — 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Bald, barcoded assassin 47 comes out of retirement and takes on the bad guys with a range of weapons. Not bad for a bloke who spends his time in a shed. You're rewarded for doing things quietly, but how you go about it is up to you. This is freeform gaming at its finest.

14 MARIO POWER TENNIS — 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/104

If you stick with it and learn the ins and outs of the power shots, you're left with an incredibly tactical game. It levels the field, making it a stage where the most seasoned veteran can take on the most casual gamer and still have a closely fought match.

15 PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME — 91

UBISOFT ■ NGC/90

Ubisoft shows other developers how to update classic games without ruining them, as the brilliant 2D platformer gets transformed into an outstanding 3D platformer. Maybe there's too much fighting, and maybe the puzzles are too samey, but it all reeks of quality.

16 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR — 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100

With Mario's unique ability to fold himself into a paper plane or turn sideways to become nigh-invisible, plus a great fighting mechanism and rippable scenery, this is a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what it does best – creating unique games.

17 FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/114

This RPG favours brains over brawn, and it features a large cast of engaging characters that you'll really grow to care about. In addition, you'll get to fight your way through some truly tactical battles. Engaging and emotional, this game will slowly but surely get you hooked.



18 WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

A few tiny framerate problems hamper the PAL version of this aquatic racer, but it is still a fabulous game. It's convincingly speedy and looks wonderful – the water effects will leave you staggered. The controls are intuitive and effective. In short, this is magic.

19 BATTALION WARS — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/113

With all the hallmarks of the brilliant *Advance Wars*, *Battalion Wars* perfectly balances action with strategy. Commanding armies over vast, detailed landscapes with total control, you'll be thoroughly addicted by the awesome gameplay and vibrant graphics.

20



VIEWTIFUL JOE — 90

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84

Some people love the unusual look; some people hate it. Either way, get past the cel shading and this 2D-yet-3D beat-'em-up impresses. Elements like speeding up and slowing down time during battles only add to the feel, letting you pull off amazing combos. Some of the puzzles are illogical, which can be frustrating, but its elegant design and nice touches will still win you over.

21 SECOND SIGHT — 90

CODEMASTERS ■ NGC/97

Excellent psychic stealth-'em-up. Who are you? Why are you here? All will be revealed – if you survive. Telekinetic powers produce some intriguing gameplay and the compelling plot and quality cutscenes are engaging. Superbly produced, this is a memorable game.

22 METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES — 90

KONAMI ■ NGC/91

A superb stealth/action adventure with a healthy pedigree. A great story combined with revamped graphics make this old Playstation title blossom on the Gamecube. With superb voice acting and music, this is a good game that should be in your collection.

23 BURNOUT 2 — 90

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

The best realistic racer on Gamecube. It looks great and it's wonderfully fast. And then there is the crashing. When you've had fun roaring around the streets, you can beat up your car in the most spectacular manner possible. Accessible and entertaining.

24 WARIO WARE INC: MEGA PARTY GAME$ — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/97

A quickfire succession of hilarious five-second minigames are blasted at you and up to three friends. With tasks like nose picking, cat poking and banana peeling, it's original, outlandishly quirky and very good fun. This comes thoroughly recommended, but not by cats.

TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
This is a tour-de-force of everything that good gaming should be. An absolute delight.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME
An innovative time-rewinding twist and excellent puzzles make this essential.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN
Good looking with trickier puzzles and, ahem, more 'mature' content.

LUIGI'S MANSION
Luigi buys a mansion and finds it's haunted. It's a little easy, but you'll enjoy every second.

DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT
Simply put, it's bongo brilliance.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES



MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!
Single-player mode looks as cute as it ever did, but now it's rock hard.

F-ZERO GX
Expertly crafted arcade fun that rockets along.

WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

BURNOUT 2
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching pile-ups.

EXTREME G 3
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

25 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE I & 2 — 90

SEGA ■ NGC/78

This online RPG will devour huge chunks of your life. Get ready for lots of menu screens, numbers and bashing crates. Note: 1) you'll need a broadband adaptor to play online – good luck finding one! 2) Third-party memory cards are prone to corrupt with this.

26 1080° AVALANCHE — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

More of a racer than a trick-based snowboarder, although jumps, spins and flips are all there. Short courses and a fair bit of pace keep things feeling tight. The time trial modes are the best bits – Gate Trial will have you trying to shave seconds off for months.

27 NBA STREET V3 — 90

EA ■ NGC/104

Think *Space Jam* meets *NBA Jam* meets EA's *NBA Street* and you're pretty much there. For the Gamecube incarnation, EA heaped in a load of Nintendo characters. This is entertaining arcade basketball with all the quirks of Nintendo. What more do you need?

28 ANIMAL CROSSING — 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/98

Ever fancied leaving home and living in a town populated by animals? The full cartoon farming experience can now be yours, complete with N64 graphics and strange noises. Somehow, improving your house, filling the museum and getting a life prove very addictive.

29 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS — 90

SEGA ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll change your life," our RPG fanatic assures us. The black holes in the universe of your quest for missing moonstones are stuffed with the usual RPG battling, puzzle solving and shopping, although it looks a bit dated now.

30



CONFLICT: DESERT STORM 2 — 90

SCI ■ NGC/86

Set during the first Gulf War, this team-based shooter is superior to the original *Conflict: Desert Storm* in every way – it looks better, sounds better and plays better, and there's more of everything too! There's a completely new aspect to this one as well – you're not allowed to let any of your men die, which leads to all sorts of daring heroics as you try to save each member of your team.

31 WORMS 3D — 90

SEGA ■ NGC/87

You know the score – you have four worms that must kill all the other worms. The special weapons are still crazy (sheep, the Holy Hand Grenade), but the real difference is that, being 3D, it's harder to hit your targets, affecting your strategies for worm slaughter.

32 ETERNAL DARKNESS — 89
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
A horror that sees you playing as a dozen different characters to fight off a dark, shambling evil. As you see more, your sanity meter falls, and when that drops to the bottom… There are a few weaknesses in the combat but, other than that, this is survival horror that spans 20 centuries and is nearly perfect.

33 LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS — 89
NINTENDO ■ NGC/102
This is an obscure *Zelda* game that's pretty hard on the pockets – in multiplayer mode, each of the four players needs a GBA and link cable. Nonetheless, it's great fun, very amusing and would have scored more highly if the best bit of the Japanese version – *Tetra's Trackers* – had been included.

34 RESIDENT EVIL — 89
CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
Compelling survival horror. Play as Jill if you want to take things gently, Chris if you're feeling hardcore, then immerse yourself in this puzzle-solving, zombie-battling frightfest. There's a bit of backtracking and the puzzles are a tad annoying, but they don't hamper it too much.

35 SPLINTER CELL — 89
UBISOFT ■ NGC/81
Only Sam Fisher and his various high-tech gadgets – like sticky bombs and camera disruptors – stand between terrorists and the Free World. It's the usual stealth-'em-up stuff, but done with a fair degree of flair and polish, although the 'three alarms and you're out' rule can become annoying.

36 CONFLICT: DESERT STORM — 89
SCI ■ NGC/80
This is a rare breed: a multi-platform release that's about as far from the 'lazy port' title as you could possibly hope. This version has been fully optimised for the Gamecube. *Conflict: Desert Storm* is great fun and intensely tactical. The multiplayer is cracking good fun as well.

37 SSX 3 — 89
EA ■ NGC/87
Snowboard around one giant mountain, entering races or showing off tricks. Complete all three peaks and you'll get the chance to spend 15-30 minutes tricking your way down to the bottom. The framerate can be glitchy, and it's not quite as free-roaming as it initially seems, but it's a superb game.

38 DONKEY KONGA — 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/99
Drum along to a soundtrack, following the symbols on-screen for left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap. It's the sort of game that almost anyone can pick up and play. It's also completely addictive and tremendous fun. Despite the extra bongos costing £20 a set, the multiplayer makes it worthwhile.

39 PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN — 88
UBISOFT ■ NGC/102
The Prince is older and his game's got more 'mature' (so, scantily-clad ladies and smart-arsed comments have been dropped in). It's still great to look at and great to play, with trickier puzzles than the first game. Although the fighting is a bit dodgy, the rest of the game more than outweighs that problem.

40 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005 — 88
EA ■ NGC/98
This is a big game. You'll probably find lost tribes in there if you play for long enough, though you won't see them if you have other interests – you know, like a job or a life. More ball control, famous opponents, the ability to create your own golfer, 14 courses (11 of them new)… You can't get bigger or better than this.

TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES



SOUL CALIBUR 2
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from Namco.

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types, pounding each other's faces in: just what we've always wanted!

VIEWTIFUL JOE
Absolutely spectacular 2D-yet-not-2D side-scrolling single-player fighter.

DEF JAM: VENDETTA
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2
There's more of the same inventive gameplay, without any substantial changes to the successful formula.

TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES
Samus Aran takes on the deadly Ing in this solid sequel.

TIMESPLITTERS 2
Classy first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT
A great update, though not the revolution that was promised.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER
Looks amazing, and it doesn't have any of those boring on-foot sections.

41 LUIGI'S MANSION — 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/67
The most annoying thing about Luigi's own adventure is that it's too darn short. Apart from that, his escapades in the newly-acquired haunted house play like a combination of *Super Mario World* and *Ghostbusters*. The little man in the green hat has done himself proud with this one.

42



SUPER MONKEY BALL — 88
SEGA ■ NGC/67
The first ingenious update of the old classic *Marble Madness* sticks monkeys in balls, and it's up to you to roll them around bizarre landscapes, collecting bananas, balancing on perilous ledges and racing to beat the clock. It's addictive stuff, but if the main game isn't enough, there are loads of minigames too. These include obvious ball games like pool and golf, oddities like a tilting boxing ring and even a monkey version of *Mario Kart*.

43 TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT — 88
EA ■ NGC/105
This wasn't the revolution that was promised. Instead, it just gave *TimeSplitters 2* a bit of a spring clean. The game has been gorgeously designed and it's packed with juicy extras. The trademark humour is still in place, it's fantastic fun and the multiplayer mode is as great as you'd expect it to be.

44 NBA STREET V2 — 88
EA ■ NGC/84
This is basketball with EA's successful *Street* template. You just don't need a serious basketball sim in your collection – this one is stacks of fun, and unless real-life stats are your thing, *NBA Street* has got it all. Three-on-three action, combos and special moves are all crammed into a very fun game.

45 DONKEY KONGA 2 — 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/108
A second chance to get tendonitis. The songs may be cover versions, the menus may be pretty poor and there aren't enough mini games, but this is more of the same bongo and beats action that we all loved the first time around. Just don't play Solo mode in a crowded room: you'll look like a moron.

46 NHL 2006 — 88
EA ■ NGC/112
EA has made some big changes this time around, taking the arcade-friendly approach that made the *NHL* series such a hit in the first place back on the Sega Mega Drive. We loved it then, and we love it now – with real-time ice trails, the rink has never looked so good.

47 DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT — 87
NINTENDO ■ NGC/103
Get the bongos out, it's time to change your gaming habits. Gone are the days of using the D-pad for platformers. Who needs them when you've got bongos? This might sound odd, but it all makes sense in practice. Be warned: you'll need a Radox bath to soothe your aching arm muscles by the end of it.

48 MADDEN NFL 2005 — 87
EA ■ NGC/99
The main change to this instalment is the inclusion of the hit stick, which lets you decide how much physical impact your tackles have. Apart from that, and a few tweaks to defensive plays and Franchise mode, it's pretty much business as usual, with all the usual stats and player updates you'd expect.

49 DEF JAM: VENDETTA — 87
EA ■ NGC/82
Famous rappers get together to give wrestling games a kick up the booty. Start off as a rookie and fight your way through the likes of DMX, Redman and Ludacris, and then you'll have the pick of the ladies – though their blokes won't be too happy. Need we mention the great hip-hop soundtrack?

50 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 — 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67
Absolutely stinks of PS2 – go on, smell it – but it's such good fun that it doesn't really matter. You'll find masses of grinds, stunts and a huge range of locations. Come on guys, this is Tony Hawk – before he got in with Bam Margera and started clowning around in cars. You know exactly what this is like…

51 LOST KINGDOMS 2 — 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81
Although nowhere near as good as *Zelda* and *PSO*, *Lost Kingdoms 2* is a beautiful-looking card-based RPG – statophiles are going to love building up their decks, collecting new cards to add to it and crunching numbers. It's nicely broken up into a series of small and easily digestible pieces.

52 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER — 87
LUCASARTS ■ NGC/68
Without a doubt the best *Star Wars* game on Gamecube, both in the way it looks and the way it plays. Take part in the battle of Hoth and whizz your ship down the trench to destroy the Death Star. Note that the whole thing has since been included as a two-player co-op game in *Rogue Squadron III*.

53 VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 — 87
CAPCOM ■ NGC/105
The original *Viewtiful Joe* wowed us all with its original mixture of 2D and 3D fighting. This instalment is more of the same in terms of gameplay, but there have been some slight tweaks, like the inclusion of Sylvia, a new playable character whose different FX powers alter the style of the puzzles.

54 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL — 86
UBISOFT ■ NGC/90
Wonderful-looking action adventure that has you finding rare animals and tackling an alien invasion. The visuals are stunning and the speech and effects make the grade too. Even the mini games are fun! The world is huge and detailed, but it's slightly easy and won't last as long as you'll want it to.

55 FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES — 86
SQUARE ■ NGC/91
Multiplayer RPG for up to four players, but each one will need a GBA and link cable, making this expensive if you're going to play it properly. The order in which you pick up spells can be a bit random and the players' shared air bubble can be claustrophobic, but all in all, this is good looking and ambitious.

56 WARIO WORLD — 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/83
Punching, pounding, portly fun. That's fun with a capital F (and U and N). The meths-swilling anti-Mario gets his very own game, and it's every bit as mad as you'd expect. Gather garlic to boost your strength and embark on a (too short) escapade that combines platforming and fighting. Wah-hah-haaaa!

DIRECTORY

The best Gamecube games around

57 BURNOUT 86

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

This was a killer racer in its day, but was massively improved upon by its sequel. Despite the spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and smooth framerate, we'd still recommend you buy *Burnout 2*, because it's got all that and so much more. *Burnout* itself is worth a look though, and won't disappoint.

58 BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG 86

SEGA ■ NGC/87

Bright and bouncy, you'll have the 'la-la-la' theme tune stuck in your head for days after playing this bizarre, very Japanese platformer. Were it not for the annoyingly glitchy later levels and the poor camera, this would be a classic. Who'd have thought that rolling an egg around could be so much fun?

59 PIKMIN 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

Only Shigsy could have come up with a real-time strategy game set in a garden. Olimar's first visit to Earth is a resource-management revelation. You have 100 Pikmin to carry out your commands as you try to rebuild your ship before you run out of air. It looks as wonderful as it plays, but it's just too short.

60 XIII 86

UBISOFT ■ NGC/88

Unusual graphics, cel-shaded characters and scenes, plus comic-style effects (there are guns that literally go 'bam'…) set this FPS apart from the gun-toting crowd. Your sixth sense and a bit of stealth help to vary the pace, and when that's all over there's a great Multiplayer mode.

61 POKÉMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/113

Pokémon XD is all about 'snagging', which basically means filling your Pokédex with 'mon that have been sneakily snatched from other trainers during battle. It sounds simple, but the strategic combat is as addictive as ever and beautifully realised, making this a must for Pokémon fans.

62 NFL 2K3 86

SEGA ■ NGC/79

Possibly not as much fun as *Madden*, owing to the amount of work you have to put in to get your 11 bruisers playing together effectively. However, the enormous franchise mode and great sound and graphics make this a decent enough game of American football, if a tad out of date.

63 THE LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING 86

EA ■ NGC/87

Orc-slashing, goblin-gutting goodness featuring your favourite film fellowship. With more playable characters than *The Two Towers* (notably, Gandalf is now in the mix), this decent hack'n'slash takes you from Helm's Deep through to the defeat of Sauron at the Crack of Doom via some nifty spider action.

64 NBA LIVE 2004 86

EA ■ NGC/88

Underneath the polished EA Sports surface lies the expected, impressively deep layer of substance. The licensed music and players are supported by a strong bedrock of stats, facts and character creation tools. Overall control has been improved and you've got more offensive options too. It's soulless but slick.

65 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO 85

CAPCOM ■ NGC/78

Controlling two characters (Rebecca and Billy), you shoot your way through the usual hordes of zombies and monsters, solving puzzles to progress. Great cutscenes and in-game visuals mean this looks a treat, and it's got bags of the old *Resi* atmosphere (a coppery, bloody, fear-filled atmosphere then…).

66 MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR 85

NINTENDO ■ NGC/95

For a *Mario* game, there's a surprising lack of Ninty-ness in many of the courses – it's just not as wacky as we'd like. And there's plenty of room for sensible in, say, *Tiger Woods*. That aside, it's easy to pick up the controls and the graphics are crisp and shiny. Plenty of modes and unlockables add longevity.

67 IKARUGA 85

ATARI ■ NGC/80

Its toughness is the stuff of legend, even on the Easy setting. Your little spaceship fires white and black projectiles, and you have to hit the black and white nasties with their opposite colour. There are only five of the well-designed levels, but it will take you a while to see them all. A splendid space crusade.

68



FIFA 2004 85

EA ■ NGC/87

Continuing the healthy rivalry between *FIFA* and *Pro Evo*, *FIFA 2004* is the best football sim you can get on Gamecube (unless you import *Winning Eleven* from Japan), with around 400 licensed, face-scanned players, teams and stadia for the ultimate in realism. The free kick system has been tweaked, and the corner kicks are menu-driven. It's all here in a beautiful version of the beautiful game.

69 EXTREME G 3 85

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

This is an underrated gem. It's very, very fast, the tracks are huge and well-designed, the bikes are cool and the inventive weapons are stunning to use. This time there's an upgrade system too, with bike and weapon enhancements available, and this adds a much-needed tactical element to the game.

70 SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY 84

UBISOFT ■ NGC/106

This was the game that was supposed to give the *Splinter Cell* series a kick up the arse. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. What did happen was a thorough spit and polish job – for example, the levels are no longer linear – and as a result it feels much fresher. The addition of a co-op mode is also very welcome.

71 SPIDER-MAN 2 84

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/96

Here's a game that actually makes you feel like a superhero. Freely swinging through an enormous city, you'll feel the joy of being Spider-Man, doing whatever a spider can. The only drawbacks are that it doesn't look particularly pretty and the missions are quite limited, but it's still an amazing experience.

72 KILLER 7 84

CAPCOM ■ NGC/109

Capcom's highly original, inventive and downright weird adventure is certainly interesting. You play Harman, the man with a squad of deadly assassins inside his head. You can choose between seven of his different personalities – each with their own specific abilities – in your quest to defeat the Heaven's Smiles.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE /RPGS



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Phenomenal. A reason to own a Gamecube in itself.

HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE
Not your traditional RPG, this is an endearing, farming treat of a game.

FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE
The thinking man's RPG and the best strategy title on the Gamecube.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE



RESIDENT EVIL 4
Cranks up the action, taking the *Resident Evil* series to new heights.

HITMAN 2
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

SECOND SIGHT
Brilliant psychic stealth-'em-up from the team that brought you *Timesplitters 2*.

MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES
Beautifully updated version of Solid Snake's first outing.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Dark, psychological horror – exclusive to Gamecube.

73 JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH 84

VIVENDI ■ NGC/89

Dredd Vs Death sees the famous Mega City One come to life. Sadly, it's not an especially long life. While it lasts, you get to play as ol' chinny himself: solving crimes, nailing crooks and eventually tracking down the Dark Judges. The setting and story are spot on and the fiddly controls are the only letdown.

74 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/93

The Pokémon series gains an RPG! Your task is to save the Shadow Pokémon from Darkness and destroy the powers of the people corrupting the poor critters. There's an awful lot of fighting here and you'll need a GBA Pokémon game to get the most out of Colosseum mode, but if you're a fan, you'll love it.

75 TALES OF SYMPHONIA 84

NAMCO ■ NGC/100

This is very much a traditional RPG, and a very good-looking one at that. The characters are beautifully designed and the locations are all, without exception, stunning. The only downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld. The rubbish, clichéd dialogue will have you gnawing your arm off, too.

76 RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC 84

UBISOFT ■ NGC/78

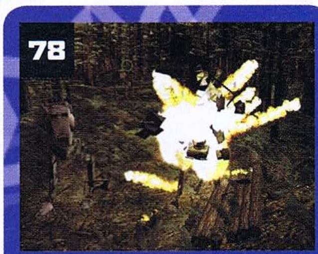
Rayman somehow manages to create a fun platformer, despite the fact that he seems to be stuck in an age when this kind of thing was revolutionary. However, it's bright, it's solid and it's got some enjoyable mini games. It doesn't get boring and the difficulty curve is scaled just right.

77 ISS2 83

KONAMI ■ NGC/68

This series was untouchable for a while, but then EA found out and made its *FIFA* games loads better, leaving the Gamecube *ISS* behind in its wake. *ISS2* is a good game with great commentary, but we were expecting much more of it and, unfortunately, these expectations weren't met.

78



STAR WARS: REBEL STRIKE 83

LUCASARTS ■ NGC/88

Star Wars is all about dogfights with screaming TIE fighters and taking on vast Star Destroyers, not poncing around on foot. Unfortunately, *Rebel Strike* introduces these pedestrian sections, and they're a bit of a trudge, ruining the excitement of the rest of the game. However, like its predecessors, it looks and sounds great, and the two-player Rogue Leader mode is outstanding, bringing the thrills of the movies to life.

79 SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER 83

TAKE 2 ■ NGC/94

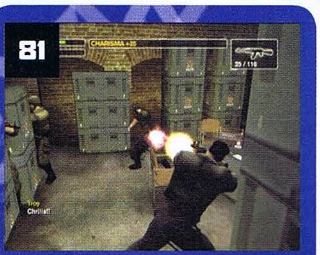
Don't be fooled by the name – this is very silly! For £20 you can spend hours gunning down wave after wave of brightly coloured aliens across a range of historical locations. The killing can get a bit relentless, and you can forget about stealth and fancy gadgets, but for a bit of blasting fun, Sam's your man.

80 BATEN KAITOS 83

NAMCO ■ NGC/103

Role-playing adventure with card-based battles. This game is unique and delivers a wonderful, magical and fantastical world – the stunning vistas, towns and interiors are awash with lavish colours. Even the card system works well. Unfortunately, it's let down by some stilted and painfully wooden voice acting.

81 FREEDOM FIGHTERS 83



EA ■ NGC/86

Although much less serious in tone and delivery than *Conflict: Desert Storm 2*, this is still a highly enjoyable squad-based third-person shooter. Unfortunately, there are some issues with the controls – aiming in first-person mode is pretty much impossible – but if you look beyond these issues, you'll find an absorbing and, most importantly, fun game that offers both straight-up blasting thrills alongside more tactical elements.

82 FIFA 2003 83

EA ■ NGC/75

Having had the football crown stolen by *Pro Evo*, EA sought to re-establish itself as the king of the football game. The result was a remarkably in-depth and well-presented version of virtual soccer. Along with the correct names and kit, the movement of the players and flow of the game are vastly improved.

83 SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR 82

SEGA ■ NGC/112

You take control of Spartan, a conveniently named Spartan warrior, as he sets out to dismember every single Roman in the world. With up to 200 people on-screen at any given time, this is hectic, violent and bloody, and just how war should be. With historical accuracy put to one side, this is great fun.

84 TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 82

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/100

This time the graphics have a more cartoony feel, and Story mode unfortunately features a lot of Bam Margera, so if you find him annoying, there's a good chance you won't like this. The rest is great, keeping the classic *Tony Hawk* gameplay and including parts of the first three games – with a timer!

85 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 82

SEGA ■ NGC/78

If games teach you one thing, it's this: out of balls, monkeys probably carry guns and want you dead. Inside balls, however (a monkey's natural habitat), the little creatures are an absolute delight. The format is the same as the first in the series, and there are new mini games and over 100 levels.

86 METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM 82

VIVENDI ■ NGC/88

As hard as Ray Winstone in a steel top hat, this robot shoot-'em-up is tough right from the training level. You take control of a small yellow robot called Glitch, and your task is to defeat a rock-hard army of robots. The camera can be awkward, though, and the landscape hazards are unfairly harsh.

MY BESTEST DS GAMES

by Martin Kitts (who apologises for deleting all of the reader entries)



NINTENDOGS
Perfect for keeping my girlfriend occupied while I watch dodgy Japanese films like Visitor Q.

ADVANCE WARS DUAL STRIKE
Perfect for keeping me occupied while my girlfriend watches Titanic.

METEOS
Don't trust anyone who tells you they can beat your high score simply by scribbling on the screen. This is THE DEVIL'S WORK.

WARIO WARE TOUCHED
The first game in which a six-year-old girl knocked me off the top of the score charts.

SNOWBOARD KIDS
Thanks to this, my N64 is now restored to its rightful place underneath the telly.

CHOKKAN HITOFUDE
Otherwise known as *Polarium*, but playing the Japanese version reinforces my hardcore credentials. Also, no small child will even know how to start this, let alone dominate the score tables. In your face!

Want to see your chart and picture here? Or perhaps you've already sent one which fell victim to Kittsy's passion for the Delete button. Either way, email us. Again! ngc@futurenet.co.uk

87 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP III: CARD REVOLUTION 82

SEGA ■ NGC/94

This is a new idea and a new direction for *PSO* card-based battling. You now have to choose a side (the Arkz or the Heroside) and do battle with dice and cards. It's best if you're familiar with the original *PSO* though and, unfortunately, you'll need a broadband adapter to play this.

88 SSX ON TOUR 82

EA ■ NGC/114

More downhill slick tricks and stunts, in the same vein as *SSX 3*. This time you can speed down the slopes on skis, and there are over 100 tough challenges fo you to complete. It's demanding, enjoyable and satisfying, but it won't give fans of the series anything new.

89 THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT 82

EA ■ NGC/89

Having spent the previous game imprisoned in their own home, this instalment sees your virtual people released into the real world to work. It still doesn't exactly look brilliant or sound that great, but as with all games that have no absolute goal or plot, it will last you for a very, very long time indeed.

90 NFL STREET 2 81

EA ■ NGC/103

This game tears up the rulebook and gives you licence to run like hell, boasting a new ability that lets you run around the walls, *Prince of Persia*-style, to gain height when catching or passing a human pile-up. A quality package, though probably without mass appeal outside the US.

91 OCARINA OF TIME MASTER QUEST 81

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

This game is nothing short of a bargain. Although the graphics haven't been updated, that doesn't mean the gameplay isn't up to scratch. This version has tougher dungeons and different puzzles from the original *OOT*. Forget the graphics (it's an old game) and immerse yourself in Rinkydink's earlier outing.

92 TIGER WOODS 06 81

EA ■ NGC/112

Tiger Woods's almost perfect swing system has had a few tweaks for 2006. The ball is now controlled by the C-stick and putting is now on the analogue stick. Despite being tricky to get used to, the classic *Tiger Woods* gameplay remains intact, making this one of the best golf sims available.

93 TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND 81

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/114

Skate fans can kiss goodbye to their social lives when they get their hands on this massive, sprawling game. There are loads of missions to complete, an optional BMX to try, a vast Los Angeles-themed skatepark, and no loading screens to distract you from your grinding.

94 AGGRESSIVE INLINE 81

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/72

A top-class rollerblading sim. Having wheels that stay attached to your feet when they're off the floor means you can pull off moves like swinging around lampposts. There's even a Career mode. On the negative side, the soundtrack is rubbish and the graphics are a little bland.

95 THE SIMS 81

EA ■ NGC/79

Your Sim has to do all the things a real person would: leave home, make friends, find a partner, eat, sleep and go to the lav. Yet it's all done in a bizarrely addictive way. There's no point to it and there are no objectives, but that's life for you – entirely meaningless, but you want to keep doing it anyway.

96 F1 CAREER CHALLENGE 81

EA ■ NGC/83

Ever wanted to indulge in the life of an F1 driver? Now you can. This is part of EA's *F1* series, but with the addition of an extensive Career mode. There's a series of trials to prove you can handle the F1 disciplines, then you can get on with the racing part, which looks good, shifts well and handles nicely.

97 NHL 2005 80

EA ■ NGC/99

This is a slick, quick game of hockey. The action's quick and the AI and graphics have been improved. However, if you dislike the sport, there simply won't be enough here to convince you that it's worthwhile. For the fans, though, it's easy to learn and you can rack up huge scores. Good fun.

98 CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE 80

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/114

Win World War II all over again in this fast, furious and fun shooter. Okay, so the AI is quite limited and the gameplay a bit too linear, but when you're blasting your way through the frantic and incredibly varied missions, you simply won't have time to notice these flaws.

99 MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE 80

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77

The fighting system's been vastly overhauled from earlier *MKs*, although it's far too easy to get an infinite by button mashing. The lack of ring-outs and stage-specific finishers is disappointing. Still, you've got three fighting styles per character, a ton of unlockables and loads of gore. Best with two players.

100 BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/81

Endlessly battling goblins and orcs can get a little tedious, but if you've ever played D&D, you'll enjoy levelling up and spending your EXP. However, it's a lazy port from PS2, with slowdown and a jittery framerate. Nonetheless, the game still looks a treat and one level has you beating up cowardly lions.









THE NGC BACK PAGE QUIZ

Your chance to win a brand spanking new DS Lite, just by answering some simple questions!





And so we wave goodbye to another issue. And what better way to see it off than with a bit of fun? There's no better way! Unless the last page contained a £50 note. Or a small puppy trained to fetch your slippers and say "sausages", like that dog on That's Life. Or the secret to immortality.

Sadly, we have none of those things for you, apart from the secret of immortality, and Kittsy's not telling (although from the hints he's given, we reckon it's something to do with langoustines).

What we do have – or what we will have the minute it's actually released – is a new Nintendo DS Lite. How good is that? Pretty good. And probably unbelievably brilliant, if we're honest.

All you have to do to win it is answer the following 10 questions correctly. We'll draw one lucky winner from the enormous NGC hat (it's a fedora) and let you know if it's you. Get to it! (Oh, and read the rules first, eh?)

1. What did we call "the devil's work" in this issue?

2. "A quaint reminder of how easily we were impressed back in the day." Which game were we talking about?

3. What game did Fuse make before its latest effort, which is reviewed in this issue?

4. Which game does Greener talk about in this issue, that was "one of the only N64 games to feature male nudity"?

5. According to you lot, what was the best import game of the last year?

6. "You can belch out creamy smoke to scupper your opponents." Quite. But in which game can you do so?

7. Which game was described this issue as an "annual festival of happy craptitude"?

8. Name the new super power in *Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble*.

9. If you were best friends with Link, would you call him:
a) Grackleman
b) Wilson P. Stinkfinger
c) The ol' Rink, the ol' Dink, the ol' Rinkydink?

10. Kamek is described as three things in this issue: Magician, adoptive father and… what?

Bonus Question: Which film is the quote in rule number four from?

HOW TO ENTER

Send your entry on a piece of paper in an envelope, or on a postcard, to:

Gettin' Down
To Quizness
NGC Magazine
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth St
Bath
BANES
BA1 2BW

THE RULES

1. Closing date for entries is 3rd March 2006.
2. Employees of Future Publishing, their relatives, better halves or genetically modified attack spiders may not enter.
3. The third rule is the most mysterious one.
4. I've been giving serious thought to eating your wife.






TWO JOES ARE BETTER THAN ONE!
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